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NEW STATESMAN

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NEW STATESMAN

Vol100 25 July 1980 No 2575

Contents

1 **Notes:** Japan's money; Saudi Arabia's kidnap; Tunisia's crisis; housewives' duties; Whitelaw and the Luton murder; how not to help Zimbabwe
4 **America's eavesdropping on Britain:** Duncan Campbell
5 **London Transport's real needs:** Mick Hamer
Writers go on strike: Francis Wheen
6 **Tories threaten British Gas:** Christopher Hird
Unanswered questions about Cartoon Campbell: Jennifer Monahan
8 **A history of the Angolan revolution:** Christopher Hitchens
10 **Frank Chapple and democracy:** Patrick Wintour
13 **Black people and politics:** Mike Phillips
14 **Recessional:** Roger Woddis
15 **The proper defence of Britain:** Robin Cook
16 **Northern Diary:** Rob Rohrer
17 **Letters to the editor**

Arthur Marshall is on his hols, but will be back next week

Books & Arts

18 **Political kidnapping:** Nigel Cross
19 **Women and trade unions:** Anna Coote
20 **English Post-Impressionism and Roger Fry:** John Spurling
20 **Gavin Ewart's collected poems:** Andrew Motion
21 **New novels:** Nicholas Shrimpton
22 **Prison camps and psychiatric hospitals in the USSR;** Olga Semenova
24 **The Williams Committee on censorship:** David Benedictus
25 **Recent rock records:** Mark Kidel
25 **Studies of Mahler:** Andrew Clements
26 **Alan Parker and James Ivory:** John Coleman
27 **Televised Olympics:** Julian Barnes
27 **British art at the Hayward Gallery:** John Spurling
28 **Weekend Competition and Chess**
29 **Crossword**

Poems by Simon North and Ron Butlin
Cover photo: Camera Press; **illustration:** John Minnion

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NOTES

Japan recycles oil profits

James Bartholomew writes: Japan has belatedly joined other major economies in re-cycling the huge oil profits of the Middle East. Since oil prices began to rise last summer, the Arabs have been buying Japanese shares and bonds, making huge deposits at Japanese banks and importing Japanese products on a far larger scale than ever before.

After the first oil crisis in 1974, foreign investors as a whole bailed out of Japanese shares to the tune of US $1.5 billion over a period of 15 months. But this time, the trend has been reversed. In the nine months starting last June, foreigners bought a net $597 million on a comparable basis, or $1.4 billion if sales of bonds converted into shares are included. A survey by *Nipon Keizai Shimbun,* a leading Tokyo newspaper, claimed that oil producing countries owned 2.6 times as many shares in Japanese companies as the previous year — with a total value estimated at $454 million. But Middle East investors often hide behind the names of their advisers (many of them — like Morgan Grenfell, Robert Fleming and Cazenove — in London): the chances are that they hold shares worth nearly $2 billion.

Many Arab investors, the Saudis for instance, prefer fixed interest investments — preferably government securities. Fortunately for them, Japan has been running a budget deficit and so has started issuing bonds. Since June 1979, foreigners have bought a net $212 million of them. The Saudi government is thought to have agreed to buy bonds regularly — rumoured at $50 million a month. Phillips and Drew, the stockbrokers, estimate that total government-to-government deals between Japan and the Middle East amount to more than $500 million so far this year, 'with more to come'.

Bank deposits, of course, are kept more secret than anything else. However, we do know that since June last year, net foreign currency borrowings of (or deposits with) Japanese banks have increased by $18 billion, taking the major burden of financing Japan's balance of payments deficit since the latest oil price increases. The Japanese reserves, in contrast, have changed by only $2.8 billion. One European banker has reported that an unnamed Arab central bank has placed a limit of 15 per cent on the amount of reserves it will hold in yen: after the 1974 crisis the same central bank did not even have a special category for yen. And it was recently announced from Bahrain that 11 more banks had been given permission to open representative offices — of which 10 are Japanese.

Japan was already a leading exporter to the Middle East before last summer. But exports to far this year are up by 57 per cent — particularly impressive in view of the high base level and the 70 per cent fall in Iran's total imports during 1979. The efficiency of the Japanese economy explains both the growth in trade and the flood of investment money. Despite an almost complete reliance on imported energy, Japan's GNP has risen at an annual rate of 4.1 per cent since the 1974 oil crisis; West Germany's grew at 2.4 per cent, the United States' at 2.3 per cent and Britain's at a mere 0.9 per cent. Japanese shares, too, have outperformed every other advanced country, showing an average rate of return during the last decade of 17.3 per cent.

Where is Nasser Said?

Fred Halliday writes: In contrast to its clamorous protests at the film *Death of a Princess,* the Saudi government is keeping resolutely silent about the disappearance in Beirut of a prominent Saudi opposition leader, Nasser Said. Requests for clarification made by a group of Labour MPs (led by Stan Newens) and by international human rights organisations have so far met with no reply.

Said, leader of the banned Arabian People's Peninsula Union, was abducted on 17 December last year while walking the few hundred yards between his home in the Wadia Sabra area of Beirut to an appointment with a French journalist at the offices of the left-wing daily *al-Safir.* Although it was initially thought that Said had been killed, subsequent reports from inside Saudi Arabia suggest that he is now held in a prison in Riyadh, and Palestinian sources at Beirut airport saw a mysterious load taken on to a plane from a Saudi embassy car soon after the abduction. Claims by the Saudi embassy that this was in fact the sick daughter of the Saudi ambassador to Syria are not believed, especially since the flow of medical traffic tends to be from the Saudi kingdom to hospitals elsewhere.

Nasser Said, now in his 40s, came from the Shammar area of Saudi Arabia, a long-standing centre of opposition to the Saudi ruling family, and in 1956 he was one of the organisers of the first ever major strike in the oil fields. In exile he founded the APPU, a Nasserite grouping that was responsible for a number of urban bomb attacks in the 1960s. In 1969 th APPU was associated with an abortive coup by air force officers, an incident featured in the *Death of a Princess* film.

Said was the author of a history of the Saudi ruling family and until Egypt's rapprochement with Saudi Arabia after the 1967 Arab-Israel war he broadcast a programme on Cairo Radio entitled 'Enemies of God'. He enthusiastically welcomed the seizure of the Mecca Mosque by armed rebels last November and in an interview published on 10 December in the London weekly *Al-Dustur* he stressed that the mosque seizure was part of a much wider movement of social and nationalist resistance brewing inside the Saudi kingdom. He also stressed that the elements who seized the mosque were a continuation of the *ikhnan,* the tribal rebels who had initially helped put the Saudis in power and had then been crushed by them, with British support, in the late 1920s. This outspoken support for the mosque rebels almost certainly accounts for Said's disappearance exactly one week later.

Can Tunisia's President keep the lid on discontent?

Claudia Wright writes from Tunis: This month, as Tunisians dutifully celebrate President Bourguiba's 77th birthday, the old man has changed course yet again. The increased repression of the past two years has failed to stop discontent, so he has now hinted at a liberalisation of sorts — amnesty for political prisoners, conciliation towards the trade unions, a reduction in torture — in the hope of pacifying his opponents. Two of the closest and most concerned observers of this move will be France and America, the traditional guardians of what communiques like to refer to as Tunisia's 'political stability'.

In January this year, France rushed a naval squadron, air transports, helicopters and armoured cars in reply to Bourguiba's call for help after a guerrilla group attacked police and army barracks in the small mining town of Gafsa, 280 miles south west of Tunis. At the time, the government was able to convey the impression that the Gafsa incident was a major assault, launched by Libya and inspired by the Soviet Union. The Economist Intelligence Unit reported that the invaders numbered 300; in fact there were no more than 60. Nevertheless, the Gafsa incident did show how jumpy the Western powers are at anything that smacks of internal trouble in their client states in the Arab world.

The Gafsa rebellion also reminded Bourguiba that a number of his former challengers are still alive and eager. Ahmed Ben Salah, a former planning minister, heads the leftist Mouvement d'Unite Populaire (MUP) from exile in Paris; Mohammed Masmoudi, the former foreign minister, is under house arrest in Tunis; Habib Achour, former head of the Union Generale de Travailleurs Tunisiens (UGTT) is in prison for his alleged role in the 1978 union riots. More radical and threatening are the Marxist groups within the student movement, and small but proliferating cells of the Muslim Brotherhood. While officials claim to see Gaddafi's hand in most of these challenges, there is plenty of evidence that they are developing out of the serious economic crisis into which Tunisia has slipped.

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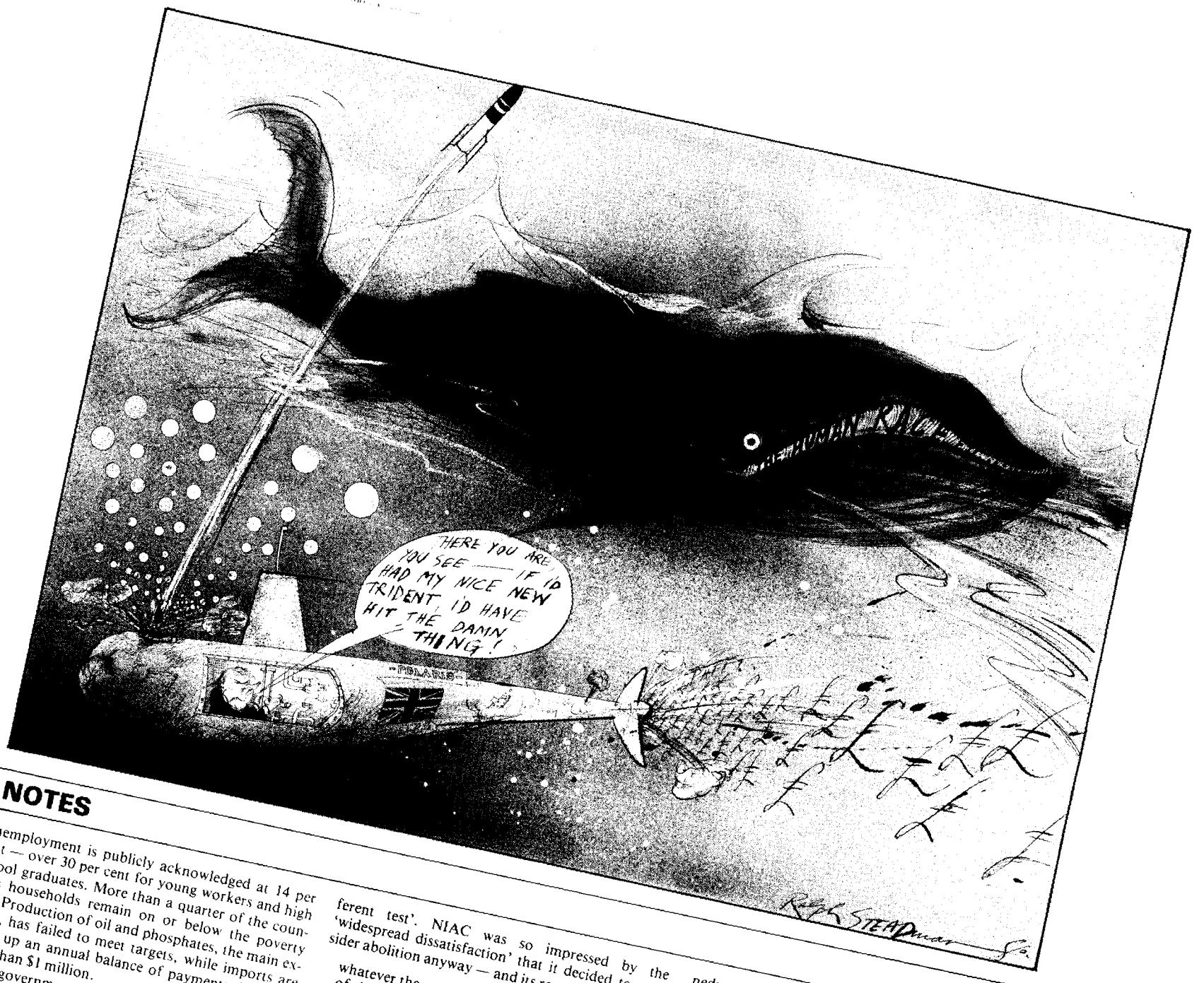

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Unemployment is publicly acknowledged at 14 per cent — over 30 per cent for young workers and high school graduates. More than a quarter of the country's households remain on or below the poverty line. Production of oil and phosphates, the main exports, has failed to meet targets, while imports are piling up an annual balance of payments deficit of more than $1 million.

The government has turned to international agencies such as the World Bank, but in its latest (and still secret) report the Bank is sharply critical of Tunisia's tax and subsidy policies. Three-quarters of government revenues are raised by indirect taxation, which of course hits lowest income earners hardest. A subsidy system for keeping food prices within reach of the poor has run out of money. Tunisian workers who object to the menial wages required by the export sector have accumulated one of the most strike-prone records in the current statistics of the International Labour Organisation. None of the palliatives at present being considered by President Bourguiba will make the slightest difference to these problems.

New call to end household duties test

Ruth Lister writes: The 'normal household duties' test, which requires married women to prove that they are unable to do housework before they can qualify for the non-contributory invalidity pension, is now under fire from the National Insurance Advisory Committee (NIAC). The Callaghan government referred the issue to NIAC in 1978, to avoid possible defeat over amendment regulations it was trying to rush through at the time. The Committee's terms of reference were not intended to cover any consideration of abolishing the test; however, most of the representations it received 'recommended either total abolition or its replacement by a different test'. NIAC was so impressed by the 'widespread dissatisfaction' that it decided to consider abolition anyway — and its report concluded:

> whatever the arguments for applying a special test of this kind to married women in the past, these arguments must inevitably grow weaker in the future as employment outside the home becomes more and more the norm for married women.

NIAC did suggest an alternative, but recommended that if the DHSS found this impracticable, 'consideration should then be given to the possibility of phasing out the test'. It was in response to pressure from Patrick Jenkin that the last government promised MPs a debate on the subject when NIAC reported. The pressure is now on Jenkin himself to allow time for this debate.

Still no justice for McMahon

John McVicar writes: Two years ago I wrote an article which the *New Statesman* published on 25 August 1978, detailing the many ways in which the Luton post office murder was unsafe and unsound. Home Secretary Whitelaw's decision last Friday to remit after ten and a half years the remainder of McMahon's and Cooper's life sentences was certainly better than the shabby irregularities which successive Home Secretaries and appellate judges have condoned over the last five years; but it's hardly justice. And Whitelaw's claim to have upheld his 'responsibility for the maintenance of public confidence in our system of justice' is hardly justified.

McMahon himself put it succinctly enough the afternoon of his release, when he expressed disgust that it had taken a paperback book, which only repeated facts and arguments that had been known to the Home Office and the Appeal Court for five years, to secure his freedom. Of course, the book, *Wicked Beyond Belief*, was edited by Ludovic Kennedy and has a section by Lord Devlin, former Lord Justice of Appeal and one of the most eminent judges of our time, which details the Court of Appeal's departures from due process in this case. It was published in June, when a new Lord Chief Justice had just replaced one who contributed to the injustices which kept McMahon and Cooper in prison for so long. And, of course, the weasel Merlyn Rees was gone from the Home Office.

Nevertheless, Whitelaw only compounded the injustice of the case when he explained that he would not grant a free pardon (which would have enabled the men to claim compensation) because he wasn't satisfied they were innocent. Under our system of law, his responsibility is to ensure that if a conviction is unsound or unsatisfactory, then the *conviction*, not the sentence, be set aside. His action hardly accords with Lord Devlin's judgement that 'doubts do not just lurk: from the first they have flown about the case like bats in a belfry'.

Our 'help' to Zimbabwe, in theory and practice

David Holmes writes: Lord Carrington this week criticised Britain's Western allies for not giving aid to the new Zimbabwean regime, and restated Britain's commitment to helping the Mugabe government through the first difficult years in office. To demonstrate his sincerity, he might care to study the case of Chosen Nkala and Maxine Tshuma, two Zimbabwean girls who came to Britain this year to study for future careers in their own country.

They arrived on 18 February, and immediately sought entry as students. This was refused by immigration officials at Heathrow Airport, who said the girls did not intend to return to Zimbabwe after their studies, and were not suitably qualified to study for 'A' levels. They also said Miss Ivy Nkala,

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the girls' aunt and sponsor, did not have the means to finance their studies. The girls were thus only allowed temporary admission to Britain.

Ivy Nkala, who has worked in Britain for the past 21 years, says she produced letters at the airport which showed the girls had been provisionally accepted for 'O' and 'A' Level studies at East Ham College, London, pending a formal interview. She was unaware she had to produce financial documents, but fortunately had a bank statement with her. She says this must have been misread by the officals, as the amount in credit was closer to £700 than the £100 they now claim. She has since submitted evidence to the Home Office which shows she owns three houses in London and is perfectly capable of supporting the girls.

In March, Timothy Raison, Secretary of State at the Home Office, confirmed refusal of entry, and said any appeal must be made from abroad. On 31 March, the day before their scheduled deportation, the girls travelled to Ireland, intending to appeal against Timothy Raison's decision, but they later gained places on a course in Dublin, and applied for permission to stay there. To grant this, the Irish government needed their passports, but these were being held, without explanation, by the British Home Office.

Advisers assisting the girls failed to release the passports, but briefed a solicitor in Ireland to write to Mr Gerrard Collins, Irish Minister of Justice, pleading the girls' case. Mr Collins said that he could not allow the girls to stay, but gave no further reasons. The girls' advisers believe he was reacting to pressure from the British Home Office to avoid a precedent which would weaken their control over immigration. Pleas to Lord Soames from Enos Nkala, the Zimbabwean Minister of Finance and a relative of the two girls, have also been fruitless.

Chosen Nkala and Maxine Tshuma were expected to be removed from Eire to London today (Friday). From London they will be flown back to Zimbabwe. Once there, they face little prospect of continuing their education — the few courses in Zimbabwe are hopelessly oversubscribed.

Correction

In an article last week on the Rolls Royce/Webster and Bennett affair it was wrongly stated that a letter to Geoffrey Robinson had been written by Alec Saunders; in fact it had been written by Alex Boyd.

INTELLIGENCE
Duncan Campbell

The US National Security Agency monitors the British government

Thatcher bugged by her 'closest ally'

THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT is one of the targets of the US National Security Agency communications monitoring operations, despite the remarkable facility with which Britain has provided it at Menwith Hill. In fact, according to published sources and a US intelligence consultant, Menwith — together with other sites in the US, Germany and Italy — is a centre for 'Project Wideband Extraction'. One of the products of wideband extraction, which emerges from banks of machines at the US Army Security Agency's interception station at Vint Hill Farms, near Warrington, Virginia, is the British government's communications around the world.

This was revealed in a secret 1975 congressional report; the Fink Report to the House Committee on Government Operations and Individual Rights, then led by Congresswoman Bella Abzug. A study of NSA reported that:

> NSA monitors the traffic of specific countries, including Great Britain, our closest ally. The monitoring of government traffic has been confirmed by a former employee of Vint Hill Farms station. (The station) had a whole bank of machines (and) a whole team of men whose only job was to read and process intercepted British communications.

Paradoxically, the 'secret' Fink report containing these references was published, unattributed and unnoticed, during 1978 hearings on the US's new Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act.

Project Wideband Extraction, with which Menwith Hill and other NSA stations are connected, started operations at the Vint Hill Farm station during July 1969. The job, as the name implies, was to extract signals and messages of intelligence interest from a 'wideband' containing hundreds of thousands of other communications. Sometimes these communications would be transmitted around the world by satellite for analysis, after being intercepted. More often, according to US intelligence officials, giant freight aircraft would fly back to the US from Europe and Australia, loaded with reels of magnetic tape to feed into analysing computers.

Menwith Hill, as we reported last week, carries out a great deal of wideband interception and extraction. References to another site for 'wideband' work have also appeared in unclassified US defence appropriations hearings. This is at Gablingen, near Augsburg in Germany, which is the headquarters of the US Army Security Agency's 502d Group, responsible for interception throughout Germany.

Augsburg's role in telephone tapping was inadvertently confirmed by Pentagon lawyers in two recent civil rights cases. An army officer and some US civilians living in Germany, had sued the US Defense Department for unlawful spying on their activities. During the course of the case, the Pentagon produced a short list of units which had the capacity to tap or bug telephone calls in Germany. The 502d ASA Group at Augsburg was included. (In a recent reorganisation the US Army Security Agency has become the Intelligence and Security Command, and Augsburg has become the 66th Intelligence and Security Group HQ.)

According to two former US intelligence officials, the sites of US tapping operations in Germany are Berlin (where the allied powers can freely tap any phones they like) and Baumholder. The Baumholder station was consolidated in 1972 with all other Army Security Agency operations at Augsburg. Another minor tapping site is in Italy, where NSA is known to have two bases, at Treviso and Brindisi. Some of the submarine cables which cross the Mediteranean basin to the near and middle east can only be reached in this area.

Another site for tapping international phone and telex calls was in Sidi Yahia, near Rabat in Morocco. This base mostly intercepted French signals and cables. It has now closed and moved to Rota in southern Spain. A former analyst for NSA's Naval Security Group, who worked for more than a year at Sidi Yahia, described its operations to us:

> In one eight hour shift you would go through perhaps 500-600 pages of telex type sheets ... Once a week I was asked to translate a telephone tap tape ...

He had to watch for and file references to such people as Stokely Carmichael, Robert Mugabe, Holden Roberto, Frelimo ... 'and any British or American diplomats in the area'.

The headquarters of Project Wideband have now been moved to a giant new 'Central Security Operations Station', which NSA has set up at San Antonio, Texas. Over 5,000 servicemen and NSA personnel work full time on analysing intercepts from around the world.

Menwith Hill taps: no official denial

DESPITE SOME CONFUSED reports to the contrary, no British or American government department has denied last week's allegations that the US National Security Agency's Menwith Hill Station in Yorkshire is conducting mass tapping of international telephone and telegraph messages.

The Ministry of Defence — the only department prepared to deal with the issue — has continued to issue only what a spokesman termed a 'curiously specific' and highly 'limited' denial; namely that Menwith Hill was not intercepting transatlantic incoming or outgoing calls, nor was it listening to any domestic calls in the UK.

The accuracy of official comments on communications interception has not, historically, been reliable. But in any case, the Ministry's comments are virtually a tacit acknowledgement that Menwith Hill can listen in, as we described, to all calls to Europe, transatlantic calls going through Britain, and all telex and telegram traffic. As Bob Cryer MP suggested to the House of Commons last Thursday, the pronouncement (by the Leader of the House of Commons, Norman St John Stevas) that no minister was prepared to comment on the issue conceded the accuracy of the article by default.

The Post Office claimed last week — quite wrongly — that all aspects of interception were covered in the April Home Office White Paper. But they did lift the shutters a little. They now admit to running the high capacity cable that feeds Menwith Hill. But it's a 'private circuit' — and they can't talk about it.

John Vernon Mills, base security officer, illtemperedly hung around TV crews who filmed Menwith Hill after the *New Statesman* revelations. He told the BBC that he didn't 'wish to dignify the article with a comment'.

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TRANSPORT
Mick Hamer

Buses won't run on time without a proper subsidy

Longer queues, higher fares

LONDON TRANSPORT'S 13½ per cent fare rise this September will not solve its current financial crisis: the increase — which follows a 19 per cent increase in the spring — is only half that needed to ensure that LT breaks even this year. On 23 May the LT Executive told the Greater London Council that in the absence of a fare increase this year's loss would be £41 million and by the end of 1981 losses would have accumulated to £134 million. To avoid this the September increase needed to be 15 per cent, with a further increase of 23 per cent next April, or 35 per cent if delayed until July; alternatively there could be a single 29 per cent increase in September.

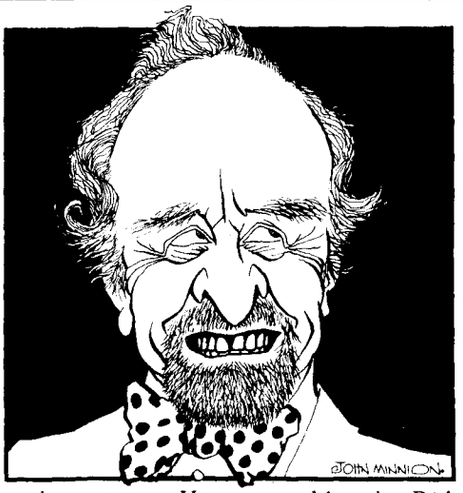
With the GLC elections in May 1981 none of these options was acceptable to the Tory council and so they suggested the 13½ per cent increase: the approval at today's GLC meeting is little more than a formality as the new fare scales are already being printed. The rise, which will increase LT's revenue by £11 million and reduce traffic by an estimated 5 per cent, will still leave LT £30 million short of break-even. Part of the shortfall will be met by using money earmarked for capital spending and the GLC hope to dredge up some extra funds from other departments.

Even if these attempts to find extra money come off — which is unlikely — there will still be a £15 million shortfall. The Tories argue that this can be bridged by extra productivity. Labour's transport spokesman Ken Livingstone thinks that is too ambitious a target in too short a time, though he agrees that the management of LT needs fundamental change. He argues that Tory leader Sir Horace Cutler, in fudging the seriousness of LT's financial position, intends to hand the undertaking over to Labour with a deficit. By law LT has to break even, so a May victory for the Tories would mean a heavy fares increase. A Labour victory would mean a 25 per cent *cut* in fares: as Livingstone points out, it is easier to make up a deficit, by levying a supplementary rate, than it is to recapture lost passengers — the inevitable result of increasing fares.

London Transport has been a long-festering political problem since 1969 when it became the direct responsibility of the GLC. But in the past few months the Tories have been making efforts to absolve themselves from blame for LT, saying that poor management and low productivity are the problem (when first elected their transport chief, Shelagh Roberts, claimed she would make the buses run on time).

The Tories rest their case on the work of LT executive member Leslie Chapman, the former civil servant and author of *Your Disobedient Servant,* and a report from PA Management Consultants. This report condemned the LT Executive for being 'self satisfied' and 'weak in the skills that are required to run a large business'.

PA'S MAIN EMPHASIS was on management attitudes, concluding that the Board lacked a sense of purpose. Predictably Cutler welcomed the reports saying that a reconstruction of the board was necessary and claiming the report supported Leslie Chapman's earlier contention that LT could save between £30 million and £50 million just by



cutting waste. However, although PA's general conclusions about management attitudes need not be doubted, the report is far from flawless.

It was based on a very limited survey. Apart from LT's board members PA only spoke to two people at the GLC — the body which owns and controls the purse strings of the undertaking. Much of the report is simply a re-run of arguments which have been current at LT board meetings. In addition, the report contains an elementary misunderstanding of LT's financial position, saying 'the level of combined grants from the GLC required to enable LT to budget for break-even has not fallen appreciably since 1975.' This statement is only true if the effects of inflation are ignored: according to PA's own figures, at 1979 prices the level of grants has fallen from £194 million in 1975 to £110 million in 1979. PA's conclusion that better management could improve services, increase passengers *and* reduce subsidies can only be regarded as wildly optimistic. Only one major operator has succeeded in increasing its patronage in recent years. This is South Yorkshire, who have kept down fares and increased subsidies.

But the political importance of the PA report is that it directs attention to LT's undoubted failings and away from the GLC's failings. As both PA and Cutler himself admit relations between LT and its owners, the GLC, are poor. PA's terms of reference meant they did not comment on the GLC's scope for improving the relationship. However, the GLC are responsible for all appointments to the LT board — even if these are made on LT's advice. Eight out of the current 11 board members owe their positions to the present Tory administration at Country Hall.

Indeed, there is an overtly political background to the PA report. When it was first published last month Cutler handled all press inquiries personally instead of the GLC press office. When I interviewed him last month he said PA's report had not come out of the blue: 'This hasn't been fortuitous'. Two years ago to this month, he said, he had been sitting 'in this very office' with Leslie Chapman discussing London Transport.

Chapman was appointed to the LT board by Cutler in January 1979 with the specific brief to cut out waste and he reported last November. His work involved a study of LT's direct works department — which accounts for a small proportion of LT's total spending and which he found to be extremely inefficient. He then assumed that the same level of savings could be made throughout the concern, supporting his views with references to small items of waste and extravagance such as the size of the senior directors' offices and the cost of executive lunches. His claims were investigated by LT's auditors, Deloitte, Haskins and Sells, who found some of his complaints justified but whose report made no estimate of the total potential savings. Towards the end of 1979 LT's deputy chairman, John Stansby, a Cutler appointee, suggested a management report on the LT Board and PA were briefed in the middle of December.

Potential savings from improving management and cutting out waste should be put in perspective: the cut in the subsidy between 1975 and 1979 — £84 million — is roughly twice the maximum that Chapman claims can be saved. It is this loss of subsidy which has created many of the problems all too evident to the Person on the Clapham Omnibus. Since 1977, when the Tories took over, annual bus mileage has dropped from 182 million to 165 million miles. London's public transport now receives the lowest subsidy in Europe. Most operators get double the proportion of revenue from subsidy that LT does. In Brussels subsidy accounts for 72 per cent of income; in London it is roughly 20 per cent. Whatever internal savings can be made, if London wants a first class public transport service it will have to pay for it.

Solidarity with Dr Who

Francis Wheen writes: Will Dr Who withdraw his labour? The Writers' Guild of Great Britain certainly hopes so. The Guild is at present engaged in the first ever industrial action by a union of writers against a book publisher — specifically, against W.H.Allen and its paperback division, Star Books — and novels about the adventures of the scarf-wearing genius are some of W.H.Allen's biggest money-spinners. The Guild plans to hold a meeting early next month with Dr Who's scriptwriters and the 'noveliser' who turns the scripts into books, with the intention of persuading them not to sign any new deals with W.H.Allen until the firm agrees to the union's demands.

The dispute has been caused by W.H.Allen's refusal even to negotiate over the 'Minimum Terms Agreement' which the Guild wishes to see accepted by all publishers (and which has already been adopted in the fields of film, television and radio writing). As David Caute explained in his article about publishers' contracts (NS 13 June), the purpose of the Agreement is to protect authors — particularly naive or ignorant ones — from the unreasonable conditions which publishers often include in their standard contracts.

Of course W.H.Allen and Star are not the only publishers to fight shy of the Minimum Terms Agreement, but the Guild has decided to make the firm a test case, partly because their standard contract includes 'a large number of totally unacceptable terms and conditions' and partly because Star publishes a high number of TV spin-offs: the Guild is strongly represented among screenwriters and 'novelisers'.

Bob Tanner, managing director of W.H.Allen and Star, was unforthcoming this week when asked about the dispute. 'I've no point of view to give you. I'm not in dispute with them, they're in dispute with me. You can get your information from them.'

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BRITISH GAS
Christopher Hird

Will the Tories weaken the most successful state firm?

Hands off, we're nationalised

BRITISH GAS HAS sucessfully resisted attempts by the government to break it up, for the time being at least. But it still faces the threat of being pushed heavily into debt later this decade and, as a result, fitting more easily the image that nationalised industries have in Tory demonology.

British Gas's current financial position is even stronger than the £426 million profit announced this week suggests. For four years now the Corporation has been completely self-financing, and it will remain so for the next few years as it embarks on a £4,000 million investment programme. This means that the revenue from selling gas is more than sufficient to pay for all the Corporation's investment in exploration, production and supply, and to provide the extra funds for working capital. By comparison, in 1977 manufacturing industry as a whole financed less than two thirds of its spending from its own resources. Furthermore, British Gas, having paid off all its debts to the government, is now in the position of lending it money: last year it deposited £200 million and this year it expects to add a further £400 million. The estimate made in the *New Statesman* last year (27 July) that by 1984 British Gas could be lending the government 'well over £1,000 million' now seems amply confirmed; except that the government has plans to make this money non-returnable by the introduction of gas tax. This would mean that the Tories have succeeded where Labour failed — in bringing British Gas under stricter state control.

British Gas's profits last year were about £60 million higher than originally planned and spending was £130 million lower, in order to meet the government's demand that BG pay it an extra £190 million. In addition, profits — and therefore the government's rake-off — will be higher this year because of the Tories' insistence that BG increase its domestic gas prices by 10 per cent more than the rate of inflation.

However, British Gas themselves have for long wanted to be completely self financing, so that the BG management could make their corporation less vulnerable to political control. The decision was justified on the grounds that being self-financing would save future gas consumers' money: today's profits would pay for tomorrow's investment, instead of the cost being heaped on to tomorrow's consumer. During most of the 1970s BG's conservative accounting policies consistently understated its profits, so that there was little awareness — outside the financial columns of the press — of what was going on. The plentiful and reliable supply of North Sea gas made it a comparatively cheap form of energy, and that kept the consumers in an uninquisitive frame of mind. It still costs about two thirds as much again to heat the average semi by electricity as by gas.

The combination of a cheap pricing policy and a strong cash flow became a particular irritant at the Treasury and elsewhere during the last few years of the Labour government. But civil servants never managed to find a foolproof and politically acceptable way of forcing up BG's prices and ensuring that the government reaped the benefits. Now the Tories have proposed a special levy on the gas which BG buys from the Continental Shelf under contracts which are not subject to Petroleum Revenue Tax. They have not said what the size or timing of the levy will be, but they have proposed to adjust the corporation's financial target so that it does not have to be recouped through prices.

The effect will be that cash which would have been deposited with the government — redeemable for future investment — now becomes levy, and is the government's to keep.

This is heightened when one considers the attempts made to break up BG, for example, forcing the corporation to get rid of its profitable oil interests. However, it seems that BG has convinced the government of two things: that the cash flow from hanging on to these businesses is greater than that likely to be achieved from selling them; and that BG has a good record as an efficient producer — it was the first company to find oil on-shore in the UK and it found gas in Morecambe Bay when other experts were sceptical. For the time being the corporation seems to have won the argument that it is a successful and efficient business and is best left alone. To emphasise the point, the chairman, Sir Denis Rooke, gave several 'hands off' warnings publicly this week.

A number of schemes have been floated for the denationalisation and privatisation of the gas industry. However, they would involve *more expensive* gas, with the extra money accruing, in the main, to the oil companies. At the moment BG controls the demand for gas not by price — a policy which it considers unduly harsh on the domestic customer — but by restricting supply, by turning away new business. Apart from the government's own energy policy, the main restriction on supply is the capacity of the system to deal with demand at the peak periods. A quarter of the current investment programme aims to tackle this problem. There are known reserves of gas to last well into the next century, quite apart from BG's £300 million research programme into a substitute for natural gas.

Jennifer Monahan

Cartoon Campbell: the system fails

ON 10 JULY a coroner's jury found that 'self-neglect' caused Richard 'Cartoon' Campbell's death in Ashford Remand Centre in March (NS 4 July). The verdict, preceded by hefty directions from the coroner, was accompanied by a rider expressing disquiet about the centre's medical facilities. It will not dispel anxiety about the way Campbell's 19 years of life ended, or about the capacity of the inquest system to investigate death in custody.

In 1971 the Brodrick Committee urged that juries should sit only in the most contentious cases — when a coroner must 'take the greatest care to be (and to be seen to be) completely impartial'. It may be doubted whether the coroner at Chertsey, Lt-Col George McEwan, passed that test. (He certainly does not pass another test Brodrick recommended: five years' experience of law practice before appointment. An army doctor until 1961, he was called to the Bar in 1962 and appointed in 1965.)

Campbell, arrested on 1 March, pleaded guilty on the 10th to attempted burglary: he was sent to Ashford for physical, psychiatric and social reports. Early on 31 March he was found dead in a hospital cell and pathologist's evidence at a preliminary inquest ascribed this to dehydration resulting from schizophrenia.

Five of six doctors at the full inquest supported this diagnosis — but seemed to rely heavily on the evidence of two arresting policemen, which was read out by a different officer. Naturally, he couldn't answer detailed questions from the Campbell's family's counsel. (In inquests, the coroner calls witnesses.)

'Confusion' was evidenced by Campbell's talking about religion, and going to Africa to help the poor. No-one told the jury that Campbell, British-born of Jamaican parents, was a recent Rastafarian convert, and such talk is usual among Rastas. Confusion, certainly, was not confined to him: Dr John Booth said it was 'highly unusual' for Campbell to reply 'life sentence death' at the mention of LSD. That is a stock nickname for LSD. The coroner did not feel that Dr Husenmiyan Chauan of Ashford should explain to the family's counsel how schizophrenia was diagnosed — calling him, nonetheless, an experienced psychiatrist whose judgement should be accepted. (Dr Chauan is not listed as MRC Psych.) Dr Booth, called in from Queen Mary's, Roehampton, said he had recommended treatment with Stelazine and Primozode. The pathologist's report, though, listed Largactil, Stemetil and Depixol. Just what drugs were given, in what doses, and how (to a patient refusing food and drink) were questions the coroner left unasked.

Having collapsed on 23 March, Campbell was taken to Ashford General Hospital, where Dr Chung Hung Tseung (not a psychiatric specialist) thought him schizophrenic, in urgent need of rehydration, but too violent for an ordinary hospital. On 24 March at St Bernard's Psychiatric Hospital, Southall, Dr Drone Greedharry thought there was nothing confused, psychotic or unco-operative about the patient: he needed physical treatment. Returned to Ashford, Campbell had lost 35 pounds by 26 March, when tube-feeding began. By 30 March he had gained nearly 25 pounds, only to be found dead next day. A senior lecturer in psychiatry at a London teaching hospital, having read the inquest transcript, found several unresolved issues and no hard evidence of schizophrenia on modern definitions, and thought a weight-gain of 25 pounds in four days was 'straining credibility'.

Col. McEwan told the jury that they must accept the (expert) pathologist's opinion. 'So the cause is as given by him and your verdict if you think that appropriate would be self-neglect'. One juror asked whether a verdict of negligence by the authorities could be returned, but was told there was 'no such verdict'.

After 30 minutes, the jury returned in disagreement, when the coroner informed them that a verdict of lack of care by the authorities (not negligence) was possible. But it would be inappropriate, he said, because the Ashford staff had done all they could, having been 'landed with a patient who was extremely difficult'.

Eventually, the verdict which the coroner wanted was produced, but the jury balked at adding the phrase 'suffering from schizophrenia'.

Instead, they added the rider with its implicit question about adequacy of medical treatment at the remand centre. Riders, at future inquests, will not be allowed: this is one of the few Brodrick reforms which has actually been implemented.

A Commons Select Committee — and the Coroners' Society — has stressed the need for changes to be made. With the system standing as it is, it is no surprising that a black spectator in the Campbel case should have cried 'Murderers!' to the court a large. The truth, no doubt, is a great deal les dramatic, but what it is remains to be discovered.

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More of our financial resources could be used to save our natural ones.

This is one of a series of advertisements designed to increase public awareness of the position of the railways in the national transport system and also in the life of the community as a whole. While the facts and figures contained in these advertisements are known and appreciated by those directly concerned in shaping the future, an industry as much in the limelight as ours has a duty to address itself to a wider audience, which needs to be well informed if it is to play its part in helping to form public opinion.

A POWERFUL CASE FOR ELECTRIFYING THE RAILWAY

Electrification offers the best hedge against any future energy shortages because it enables the railways to derive power from a number of basic fuels.

Oil will become increasingly scarce, and even more expensive, so the capability of the railway to draw its energy needs from alternative sources is especially important for the national economy.

Increased electrification would significantly decrease the railway's demand for oil: For instance, if 5,800 miles of British Rail's total 11,000-mile network were electrified (the largest of five options currently under consideration) we would save 120 million gallons of diesel oil per year.

Not only would electrification help to reduce our national dependence on oil:–

LOWER COSTS; GREATER RELIABILITY.

Electric locomotives are simpler, lighter, cheaper and longer-lasting than equivalent diesels.

They have a higher availability for service, since they require no time out for refuelling and substantially less for maintenance.

Also, electric traction is demonstrably more reliable than diesel – technical defects (hence delays) occur one-third as often.

And electric systems are able to offer faster and more frequent service. Obviously, that has important implications for more flexible policies on fares and charges. Moreover, in the long-term, electrification will increase the prosperity of the engineering industry and reinforce the export potential.

THE EUROPEAN COMPARISON

As we've seen, electrification can make a major contribution to oil and energy conservation, to better service and lower operating costs.

Yet, of the nine EEC countries, Britain has less railway electrification than all member states except Denmark and Ireland. The average electrified mileage of railways in the EEC is just over 35%, compared with 21% for Britain.

THE COST

The cost of electrification for Britain is not unreasonable. Although the *initial* investment outlay is high, the savings and increased revenue generated from wide-scale electrification would undoubtedly cover the cost in the long-run. Extra funds will be required in the short term, but they will not be wasted.

2000, AND BEYOND

If we start now, we can provide a railway system which will enable our successors to run an economic transport system in the year 2000 and beyond.

However, the later the start, the more the system will cost; inflation hampers the railways as much as any other sector.

Furthermore, the existing diesel fleet has a limited life and it will be a difficult and costly task to bridge any gap between the demise of the existing fleet and readiness of the new electrified network. Thus, the more energy and resources we spend towards achieving large-scale electrification now, the more we'll save in the end.

This is the age of the train

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SOUTHERN AFRICA
Christopher Hitchens

Can Angola's revolution outlast its enemies — and at what cost?

Bukharin could have approved

'AFROCOMMUNISM' IS an extremely hybrid and complex phenomenon. It extends from the Ethiopian military junta, through the 'non-alignment' of Mugabe, down the middle of the African National Congress, past the flank of Samora Machel, over the wretched grave of Kwame Nkrumah, way into the deserts of Namibia and the prisons of Mobutu. It probably finds its most advanced and developed form in Angola, and in the leadership of the MPLA. Here is a movement which fought politically for five years, and then with gun in hand for another thirteen, to expel the Portuguese. A movement which, with Cuban help, inflicted the first military defeat on South Africa. A government which has the highest number of white and mixed-race members in Africa. And a country which has, through its skills and immense natural resources, a better chance of achieving prosperity and independence than most of the bleak and impoverished 'African socialisms' that have gone before.

Standing on a riverbank in Cuanza Sul, which had one bridge (shattered by the South Africans) running parallel with a new one (built by the Cubans), I started to make comparisons between the Angolan revolution and the early years of the Soviet state. There were more than I though there would be when I opened the list.

The MPLA fought a long and bitter revolutionary war, only consummated in victory after a battle against foreign intervention which lost it many cadres and disrupted the economy it inherited. Its tough veterans now sit as administrators (misleadingly but interestingly called *commissarios*) in the palaces of the former elite. They govern a small working-class urban population, and an immense backward agrarian one. They are themselves vastly more advanced and educated than the people they govern. The typical MPLA militant, rather like the typical Bolshevik, will speak more than one language, will have spent several years in prison, exile, active service or all three, will be literate, and will have travelled abroad. (The typical Angolan does not even speak the Portuguese *lingua franca,* and the MPLA has only just finished codifying the six major national sub-languages.)

The atmosphere is also slightly reminiscent of accounts depicting Petrograd or (later) Barcelona. Waiters and soldiers call their superiors 'comrade'. Posters of Agostinho Neto (the Lenin figure, also tragically dead before his time) dominate most rooms and most public places. Other posters tell of fresh campaigns — campaigns of 'vigilance', of 'rectification', of 'socialist emulation' and of 'sensibilisation'. Neighbourhood committees organise rationing, literacy classes (Angola was 90 per cent illiterate at independence), some elements of security and health. In the towns, most churches are locked. In the countryside, they can be seen converted into schools. The Catholic church did not stick by its flock when its colonial protector withdrew.

The slogans about 'discipline' and 'vigilance' are not as corny as they might sound. South Africa menaces the country from the south, with invading forces and with reactionary infiltrators and saboteurs. Further afield, Strauss and Reagan talk of a 'tougher line' on direct intervention against the MPLA. And Angola has its own 'international' to uphold — the international of SWAPO, Polisario, Fretilin and the ANC. All this, too, makes it detested by 'the powers of old Africa'.

Angola's problems and solutions would have been intelligible to Bukharin as well. The money is worth very little, and there is almost nothing to buy with it. A parallel economy of barter and exchange makes it hard to get food from the peasants to feed the towns. Most of the upper and middle entrepreneurs have deserted, leaving whole streets in Luanda gaping with empty banks and abandoned shops. Spare parts for machinery are hard to get, skilled technicians even harder. 'Production' is the other constant watchword, and the role of a trade union is to get more and more work out of those who can produce.

'Unity' is another keyword. The MPLA has suffered repeated splits and defections. It was compelled, in 1977, to put down an aggressive coup, supposedly from the 'left' but in fact organised by a racialist *negritude* faction who objected to the large number of white and mixed-race members of the government. By a sweet irony, South Africa supports Jonas Savimbi's UNITA, which makes similar noises in the southern provinces. Racialists, like internationalists, know no frontiers. (But the white socialists of Angola do not demand entrenched seats and special farming privileges in order to 'stay on'.)

Those who do stay on, or those who come, and bring investment with them, are wooed with extreme care. In the Cabinda enclave, and in the ports and industrial centres, sweating Western businessmen fight for contracts. Even the Benguela railway, main target of the South Africans and their clients, is owned by the British-based Tanganyika Concessions. But gradually, in the oilfield training schools and in other sectors, Angola is training its own managers. And there are no sweetheart monopoly deals as in the happy-hunting ground provided by Portuguese colonialism. The attitude to the private sector, then, could be called 'pragmatic'. Bukharin would have approved.

Unlike Afghanistan, Angola does not have 'advisors' running ministries. But the Cuban troops make no attempt to conceal themselves. They can be seen in the streets of Luanda or on country roads, and their fatigues mark them out even if their colour often does not. In the Museum of Slavery are messages and inscriptions from Cubans whose descendants were shipped from the Angolan coast in chains generations ago. But conversation is difficult — the visitors are obviously under orders to avoid contact. Angola, too, is senstive about their presence. Great efforts are being made to build up an army strong enough to do without helpers. And of course, if Namibia became independent, and SWAPO were able to go home for their election, the whole war would become a memory. But the rulers of the world aren't ready for that quite yet.

SOUTH AFRICA'S incursion into the south of Angola had three objectives and all of them failed to a greater or lesser extent. The first was to exterminate SWAPO's command — and if it can't do that in Namibia it certainly can't do it in Angola. The second was to punish the MPLA for supporting SWAPO, and to destabilise the Angolan economy. The MPLA will not stop supporting SWAPO, any more than Machel abandoned Mugabe. Economically, great damage *was* done to transport, to roads, to factories and farms. Many lives were also lost. The best one can say about that is that Angola has survived worse. UNITA saboteurs and equipment were left behind, but for reasons which will appear, their influence is declining. South Africa's third objective was to try to rally support to the Botha regime in its hour of internal crisis, by playing the 'external enemy' card. That doesn't look like much of a runner either.

In the central plateau town of Huambo, I had two conversations with the local *commissario,* who still goes under his old *nom de guerre* of 'Comrade Petrov'. Having established that I knew Basil Davidson (a surefire introduction in these parts), he told me about the political conflict, now approaching a climax in his province.

The Ovimbundu tribe, upon whom Savimbi has always based his following, were the ones least influenced by the MPLA during the war against the Portuguese. In Petroff's judgement, they are still pretty alienated from the central government. But in recent months, a terrible famine has meant the return of tens of thousands of those who fled to the bush and the hills when the MPLA took power. I saw the camps crammed with these people, and the conditions do indeed beggar description. Every kind of deficiency, from salt to bandages, is on show. Local cadres (there are less than 2000 party members in the province) have complained that the government is not doing enough, and that if the *regressadoes* are not well-treated upon arrival they will turn away again. (This thinking demonstrates the advantage of having fought as a guerrilla yourself.) It's small exaggeration to say that on this campaign, and on the drive against the tribalism and superstition which go with the desperation of the southern peasants, depends the whole outcome of the MPLA's strategy.

Start speculating about the past experience of Russia, and you start looking out for Stalin and Dzherzhinsky. The Angolan secret police — DISA — did have to be disbanded recently after many complaints of maltreatment and abuse. Bureaucracy, not all of it 'inherited', is endemic, and economic privilege is also visible. 'War communism' is a bit harder to avoid when you do have external aggression, and the legacy of a twenty years' war. 'Kulaks', too, will take advantage of the massive scarcity and disruption. But on the optimistic side, it is certain that Angolans have studied the past, and are aware of the dangers. Forced collectivisation, for instance, is irrelevant with such an abundance of land and such a shortage of people. The Latin and Lusitanian influence dilutes any dour and conformist atmosphere Though the slogans and the committees and the compulsory enthusiasm can be very boring, the Angolan revolution has a real chance to confound its enemies, surprise its critics and even delight its friends.

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Here's one British business with news to warm your heart.

British Gas belongs to the nation. We all stand to gain from a strong, efficiently run, profitable gas industry. And that's what Britain has.

British Gas has just published its Annual Report and Accounts—and the news is good.

Record profits earmarked for massive investment programme

British Gas is wholly self-financing. The record profits announced in this year's accounts will play their part in fuelling the massive investment (over £4 billion) needed to meet Britain's growing demands for energy in the 1980's and beyond.

For instance, British Gas recently announced plans to develop its vast Morecambe Bay gas field off the Lancashire coast. This alone will cost around £1,000 million.

A further massive investment is planned to create a gas store in the partially depleted Rough Field off Humberside. This will be the first time that an offshore gas field has been used in this way.

Further major investment plans include the laying of the Corporation's biggest ever onshore pipeline—from St Fergus in Scotland to the North of England—and continuing high technology research into the feasibility of producing Substitute Natural Gas from coal on a commercial scale. This vitally important work represents a boost to the British economy.

Gas Gathering Programme

British Gas is playing a leading role in the preparatory work for the gas gathering scheme, which will bring into the nation's gas supply system from the second half of the 1980's enormous quantities of energy—which would otherwise have gone to waste.

Gas Prices

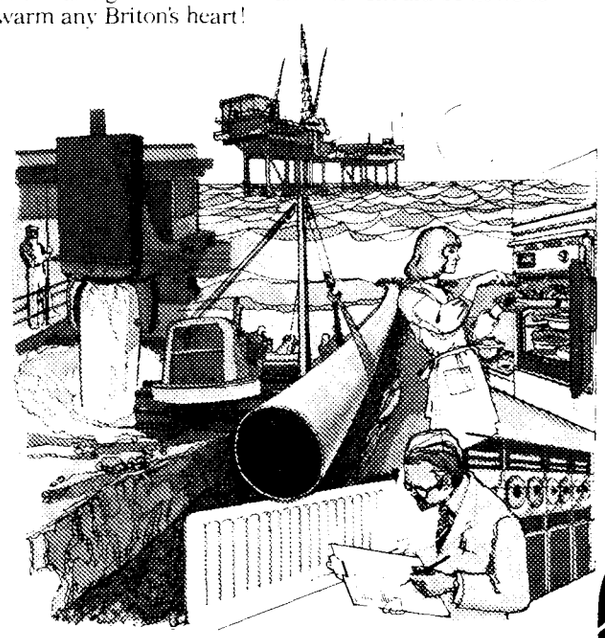
Over many years, gas customers of all kinds have enjoyed something of a bargain—and they are still benefiting, even though prices have risen, because those prices are appreciably lower than other fuels.

For domestic customers, 'The Guide to Fuel Running Costs', available from Gas showrooms, demonstrates this very clearly.

As we all know, the age of cheap energy is gone—probably forever—but efficient management will help ensure that gas prices remain competitive for the foreseeable future.

An integrated industry

British Gas is a national asset, efficiently run for the nation's benefit. From exploration, through bulk transmission of gas—and right into each home and factory connected to the supply system, it covers a whole range of gas activities. Its profits mean not only that it is able fully to finance its own investments, but also provide a surplus which helps significantly to reduce the Public Sector Borrowing Requirement. In that way the profits benefit the entire nation and not just the gas customer. In fact, British Gas is probably the largest and most successful fully integrated gas undertaking in the world—and that should be news to warm any Briton's heart!



BRITISH GAS
OUR VITAL INDUSTRY

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How Frank Chapple stays on top

Union democracy — or lack of it — is really the underlying problem of the Labour Party's constitution. In the end, union leaderships control the party's fate. But in their role are they any more 'representative' than the much abused constituency activists are in theirs? Light may be shed on the problem by making, in turn, fresh examinations of some of the chief institutions of British unionism. PATRICK WINTOUR begins here with Frank Chapple's Electrical, Electronic, Telecommunications and Plumbing Union (EETPU) on the grounds that much authoritative opinion portays it as democratic beyond the norm. John Torode of The Guardian, an unusually well respected labour correspondent, struck this note a few years ago when he called Chapple a 'rough diamond . . . dedicated to grass roots democracy.' Certainly Chapple's achievements with the EETPU have been formidable: he was one of the most effective performers in the battle against Communist ballot-rigging in the early Sixties, and under his leadership the union's financial strength has been steadily reinforced. When he speaks out against — for instance — the TUC's unfortunate 'day of action', he is treated by the media as the natural spokesman of the 'silent majority' which they claim to perceive among the working class. (Although any sensible analysis of public opinion research suggests that working class political attitudes are never simple, and rarely even predictable.) But in view of the EETPU's recent history, it is fair to ask whether the estimate of Chapple as devoted to 'grass roots democracy' remains a valid one.

IN A NUCLEAR, electronic age Frank Chapple is probably right in estimating that some of the 460,000 members of his union could return Britain to the stone age with a flick of a switch. There aren't many industrial pies without an EETPU finger involved, and the resulting influence is usually deployed on the side of what Fleet Street calls 'moderation'.

At Grunwick, an admittedly complex electricity cut-off could have decided the issue in favour of union recognition — but wasn't forthcoming. In last year's engineering dispute, the EETPU precipitated settlement. In the steel strike, Chapple's executive refused strike pay to its 10,000 steel workers. At British Leyland, the EETPU was one of the first unions to accept the Edwardes Plan (already looking a mite tattered), and in the *Times* lock-out the executive tried to accept employer's terms for its 100 electricians — closing down its whole London press branch when the members rebelled. Most recently, at the Isle of Grain, EETPU members have joined the AUEW in ignoring the TUC and walking through GMWU picket lines.

This influence is likely to expand. The UK Association of Professional Engineers is to join the EETPU, and probably after a ballot next month the Steel Industry Management Association will too — both have been outside the TUC, and will provide new white-collar strength. This year, the AUEW's rules-revision committee produced changes which might make more practicable the merger between engineers and electricians which has been long-prophesied but pursued with variable enthusiasm. (Terry Duffy of the AUEW recently stated an affection for the EETPU.) Such a merger would produce two union superpowers — a left-wing T&G, a right-wing engineer-electrician bloc — and would remodel the political and industrial landscape.

Chapple's own efforts to remodel the Labour Party by means of combative speechmaking have been amply celebrated. Not quite so well-known is the organisational side of the effort: the EETPU provides office-space to the right's Campaign for Labour Victory, and three of Chapple's closest union colleagues, including his research assistant John Spellar, have been active in the Social Democratic Alliance. Chapple himself has contacts with groups like the Trade Union Education Centre for Democratic Socialism and the NATO-funded British Labour Committee for Transatlantic Understanding.

In short Frank Chapple — the most conspicuous survivor of the group who cleared a corrupt Communist regime out of the electricians' union 20 years ago — is a figure of central importance in British politics; one whose prescriptions for the Labour movement are given much weight. Yet not much detailed attention is paid to the way the EETPU itself is run, and to the question of how democratic a structure Chapple and his colleagues have built up in their own years of power. Generally the press has been content with the description of Chapple as a 'rough diamond', or with the 1976 judgment of the *Observer's* Robert Taylor:

> Chapple is often charged with autocratic behaviour by his critics, but the EETPU is more democratic than most.

Those who challenge this estimate, and assert that the EETPU motto ('Light and Liberty') is now scarcely appropriate, cannot generally raise their voices except in obscure meeting-halls, or through scattered newsletters and pamphlets. Nonetheless, it's important to examine their claims: of disbarment of left-wing candidates for office; weakening of rank-and-file representation; imposition of wage-settlements; closure of dissident branches, and determined use of the rule-book to silence opposition.

ONE REASON that the critics are little heard from in the press is that often they do no more than mirror Chapple's own generalised anti-Communism (which itself, of course, is not uncommon among those who, like Chapple, are ex-adherents to the creed). But there is also his daunting record in litigation.

In 1971 there was a suit against the *Morning Star,* initially seeking to have the editor jailed. That failed, at a cost to the union of more than £5,000, but £500 damages and costs were successfully collected from the BBC for another item. A retired member who was publisher of *Flashlight,* a rank and file paper, has been expelled from the union. A pamphlet *The Ugly Face of Frank Chapple's Union and How To Change It,* attracted damages of £20,000, but the publishers, S.W. Litho, cheated Chapple of victory by going bankrupt. The union now pursues weightier game, suing over two articles by Paul Routledge, *The Times's* labour editor. If the case comes to court, many thousands of pounds could be at risk.

IN JULY 1961 Mr Justice Winn appointed John Byrne general secretary of the old Electrical Trade Union, after proof of ballot-rigging by five Communist officials: within months, the well-entrenched Communist majority was tossed off the executive.[1] The new executive fired the Communist assistant general secretary, and appointed Frank Chapple, a leader of the Reform Group. Les Cannon and Mark Young, also repentant Communists, became General President and National Organiser.

There was an immediate feast — perhaps, to Chapple's more recent, less insurgent, gaze, an orgy — of democracy. A rank-and-file appeals committee appeared; regular conferences of shop stewards were held; every branch was allowed to attend policy conference; a rules revision conference was established; the Electoral Reform Society counted the ballots. The one retrograde proposal, an extension of office for executive members, was defeated.

But Young and Chapple soon fell out, with the executive splitting roughly into two camps: and democratic reforms, one by one, eroded away. In 1964 the existence of unofficial, CP-inspired circulars was used to justify a ballot excluding all Communists from union office, and the proscription remains. (Chapple says banning someone for belonging to a political party is different from banning them because

[1] *All Those In Favour,* C.H. Rolph's account of the ETU expose — in which the *New Statesman* was considerably involved — is still sold at EETPU conferences.

Les Cannon (left) and Mark Young

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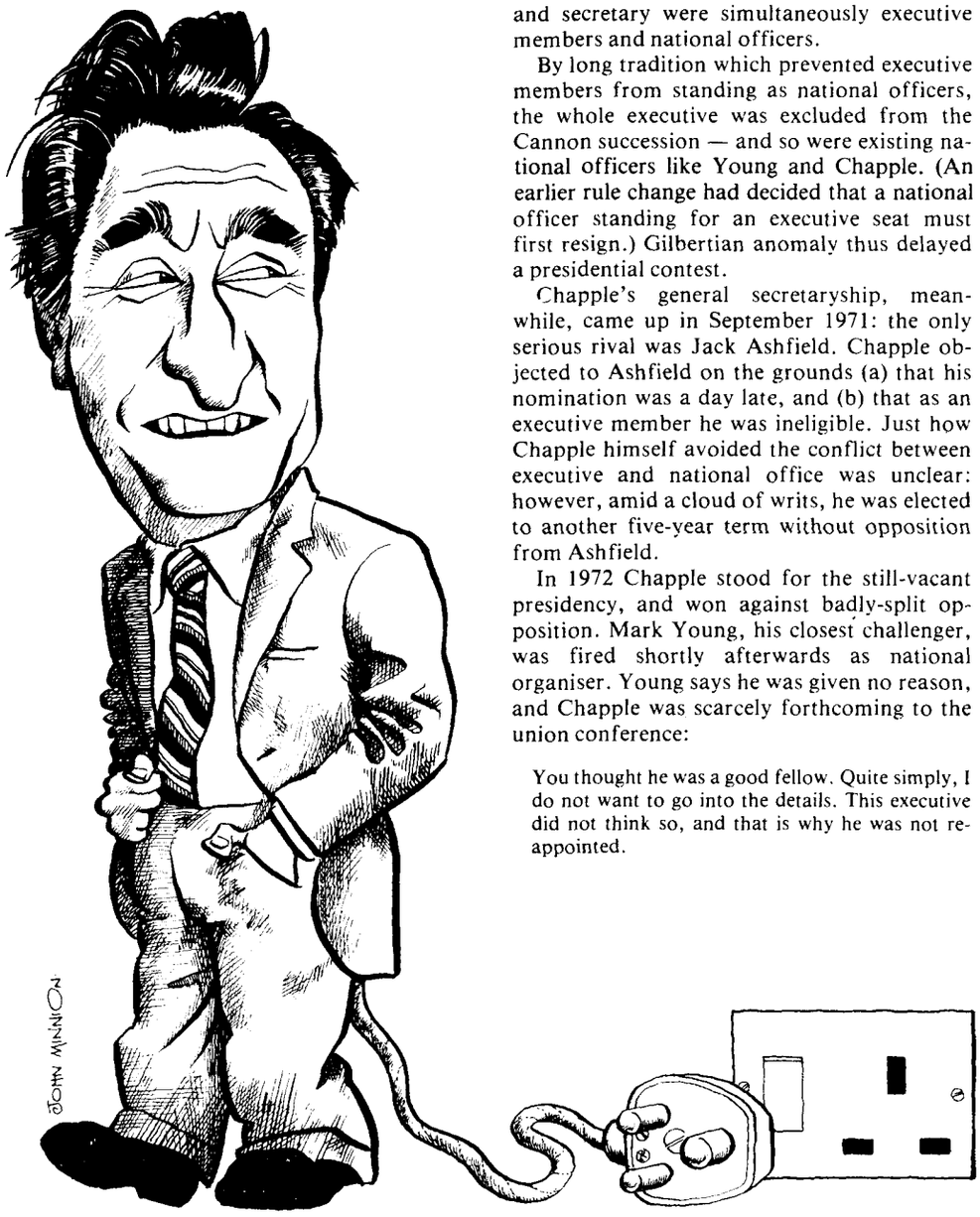

of their political beliefs. He retains a distinctive view of Communism, telling a 1977 conference which debated the ban that the British CP was the most pro-Soviet in existence, 'except Italy and France': the Kremlin, certainly, would be amazed to discover the Italians as their trustiest supporters.)

The 1965 rules revision conference abolished the elected, lay area committees — certainly a bedrock of militancy, but also the chief political link between branches. In 1969, after an initial defeat at conference, a ballot decided that the 120-odd paid officials should be appointed, not elected.

MEANWHILE, Chapple solidified his control of the centre. In 1967 he succeeded Byrne as general secretary, and others expected that Mark Young, the national organiser, would succeed as assistant general secretary. But a legal opinion found that Young was ineligible, because executive posts could not be taken by officials. President Les Cannon then held a successful ballot for abolition of the assistant secretaryship.

Cannon died young in 1970, but election of a successor was delayed. A legal opinion was obtained, saying that full-time officials could not stand either as president or general secretary without resigning first: the barrister, Ronald Waterhouse, held that both president and secretary were simultaneously executive members and national officers.

By long tradition which prevented executive members from standing as national officers, the whole executive was excluded from the Cannon succession — and so were existing national officers like Young and Chapple. (An earlier rule change had decided that a national officer standing for an executive seat must first resign.) Gilbertian anomaly thus delayed a presidential contest.

Chapple's general secretaryship, meanwhile, came up in September 1971: the only serious rival was Jack Ashfield. Chapple objected to Ashfield on the grounds (a) that his nomination was a day late, and (b) that as an executive member he was ineligible. Just how Chapple himself avoided the conflict between executive and national office was unclear: however, amid a cloud of writs, he was elected to another five-year term without opposition from Ashfield.

In 1972 Chapple stood for the still-vacant presidency, and won against badly-split opposition. Mark Young, his closest challenger, was fired shortly afterwards as national organiser. Young says he was given no reason, and Chapple was scarcely forthcoming to the union conference:

> You thought he was a good fellow. Quite simply, I do not want to go into the details. This executive did not think so, and that is why he was not reappointed.

The left now aimed at the general secretaryship, expecting Chapple to vacate it. But late in 1974, after more than 200 branch petitions had called for the election, a 7-4 executive vote decided to ballot for the abolition of the presidency. The ballot-form stated only the case against what had been the union's most important post, and it was abolished by 78,000 votes to 17,000.

THE POWER thus concentrated in Chapple's hands gives him impressive patronage, both negative and positive. For instance, in the early seventies, an elected official called Geoff Beddow, who opposed an executive decision to close the Shrewsbury office, found himself sacked. An industrial tribunal awarded him £900, 'deplored' the treatment he had received, but of course could not restore his elected position. But other critics, if accommodating, may be incorporated. In one seasoned dissident's words, 'you go to a conference and say, "Where's so-and-so?", and they reply, "Didn't you hear? He's taken up a job with Chapple." Chapple appears to delight in converting people.'

Naturally, a man with numerous livings at his disposal makes a formidable evangelist. Remaining dissenters may speak out at the biennial policy conference — where every branch may attend, vote and put motions, and as from last year about 200 shop stewards from the EETPU's various industrial conferences may also speak and vote. But the executive determines 'methods of representation' at industrial conferences, and thus controls, in the end, shop-steward representation at policy conference.

Branch representation at the conference includes a substantial injustice. A centrally-determined programme of branch amalgamation has occurred in large, urban districts, so that Cardiff is 2,500 strong, Glasgow 3,000 and Birmingham Midland nearly 6,000. But these large urban branches — which tend to be more left-wing — have one vote each, just like the rural branches which may have no more than 200 members apiece.

Mortality among branches can be high when they incur central displeasure. Cardiff is a notorious case: shortly before the vital 1977 rules-revision conference the branch — which had already been compulsorily amalgamated and placed under a full-time official — was suspended by the executive for subscribing to a Right to Work march and allowing its branch chairman's name to appear on a Right to Work leaflet. 'No branch, no delegate' their man was told at the door of the conference.

In March this year, the branch was suspended again — charged with financial irregularity, harbouring extremists, and low attendance. Former chairman Pip Jones has been suspended from holding office after writing to a South Wales paper saying, apropos of Chapple's support for Soviet dissent, that the chieftain's taste for freedom did not extend to his own union.

Birmingham Midland, with a stormy history of relations with Chapple, was sentenced this year to indefinite closure. A local official named Ray Rider having been appointed branch officer, faced a fierce, often personal campaign against him by the left. In 1977 the chairman Bob Prince, at a meeting when Rider was not present, tried to close proceedings because of interventions by a principal leftist, Mick Carton, who successfully challenged Price from the floor. Twelve months later he was charged by the executive with having assaulted the chairman (which he, and other witnesses, deny). The EETPU disciplinary committee, composed of executive members, has since fined him for assault and imposed a ban from office: Carton is now suing Prince, Rider and two others.

In October 1978 Rider got through a resolution reducing branch meetings to fortnightly occasions: the left succeeded in having weekly meetings voted back, but the executive refused to comply. Members turned up to the December meeting to find Rider barring the entrance and declaring the branch to be suspended. John Spellar, from Chapple's office, says it will remain so pending assurances that its meetings will be 'representative and properly conducted.'

The London West electrical contracting branch was closed after disagreements over forced appointment of a branch secretary: members picketed the branch on meeting nights for over a year, and not long afterwards the official resigned.

The Swindon branch has been closed since 1975, when branch secretary and treasurer were removed for financial misappropriation: the executive would not accept elected replacement because it wanted a 'clean sweep' and two successful candidates had been on the previous branch committee. The 1,000-strong

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branch remains shut, and two men who have neither been charged nor found guilty are barred from office.

In plumbing, branches have been abolished wholesale — though admittedly many had little to offer except history. Of 400 plumbers' lodges at the 1969 merger, some 300 have vanished, and there is room for doubt whether the criteria for closure have always been objective. When 12 out of 17 London lodges were purged in 1978 only Eltham and District survived intact. This is the lodge of Charlie Lovell, a member of the EETPU executive and national secretary of the plumbing section. A motion from the Cardiff branch condemning the spate of closures and calling for more consultation by the executive was passed at the 1979 policy conference.

More generally, the union has been moving for years away from branch organisation towards an American-style industry-based system, with area industrial committees and national industrial conferences which have no binding influence on industrial officers. The growth of the check-off system and the increasing geographical spread of branches has particularly hindered branch life. Today of course, it may be doubted whether American unions, or the American industrial system itself, provide the most impressive models in the Western world.

CHAPPLE is explicit that his executive must not be 'a post box' for conference decisions, nor does it appear to work that way. Last year a unanimous motion supported the National Health Service and 'preventing private practice increasing its influence': a couple of months later the executive concluded a deal to provide private healthcare to EETPU members. Because of the limitations of conferences, dissidents have been forced to try for positions on the executive, which possesses immense discretionary powers.

Executive members are now elected for five years, which appears to be the longest in the union movement. In the early sixties, there was an argument — one which Chapple seemed to go along with — saying that full-time officials shouldn't stand for the executive. (Later qualified to 'unless they first resigned their posts'.) At the 1977 conference the executive recommended, successfully, that full-time officers should in future be free to stand without resigning.

It would not be easy to deny that during the seventies the EETPU executive became, more and more, the preserve of full-time officials. Thus, of six new executive members elected since 1973, three have been full-time officials, one a former director of a substantial electrical-contracting firm, and just two from the rank-and-file and both had to win twice. To be sure, this may reflect a dislike of left-wing (or anyway insurgent) views among the membership, but it is also possible that the union's organisation benefits incumbent power rather than grass-roots democracy.

CERTAINLY THE GRASS-ROOTS are unlikely to benefit from the binding 'interpretation' which the executive sent out in February, which defines electioneering inside the union. No-one now can solicit nominations, and no-one is a candidate until he (or she?) receives notification from central office. Only then can he be given the addresses and times of branch meetings where electioneering is permissible. In divisions where there are well over a hundred branches, the chances of getting around them, in the few weeks between being made a candidate and the dispatching of ballot papers, is somewhat slender.

On the executive's interpretation, 'there is no provision in the rules for supporters of a candidate to visit branches to promote support' (which is odd, as there is a rule saying that 'a member may attend a meeting of a branch other than his own. Such a member may speak on any subject'). And it adds that

> No branch can invite a candidate, no candidate can visit plants, sites or industrial committees to electioneer, no member or member's supporters can send circulars, leaflets or letters on his behalf. No candidate can give interviews to the press.

Clearly, the full-time official, whose regular business is to move around the union, will be less affected than the rank-and-file candidate — whose only assured contact with the electorate, now, is a 500-word manifesto. Since 1971 all these manifestoes have been subject to legal scrutiny on behalf of the executive: since 1977, the conference has allowed the executive to alter them if factual inaccuracy, not just libel, is suspected.

The problem, of course, is to judge impartially what are 'facts'. Harold Best, when running for the executive, was described in an opponent's manifesto as a 'self-avowed Marxist with a half-baked vision of a communist utopia', who had unnecessarily led the electrical-contracting section of the union into a strike in 1977. Yet the fact is that no strike can be called without the support of the full executive.

The defence of such restrictions generally relies on the need to avoid 'outside interference' in the union's affairs — and without doubt Chapple and his generation had to deal with 'outside' (Communist) interference in outrageous form. No-one credibly suggests that they have replied to fraud with fraud: apart from anything else, they would have needed to corrupt the Electoral Reform Society as well as the EETPU. But the real question is whether they have defended themselves against 'interference' by building-up a real grass-roots democracy, or by building-up a system in which incumbent power, whatever its character, is almost invincible?

Some people will answer the question strictly according to their personal political fancies — to Woodrow Wyatt, 'Britain's most influential columnist', there can be no doubt about the support for Chapple of 'ordinary commonsense members' of the EETPU. Others may feel that a democratically-minded executive should not be quite so fertile in formalistic objections to candidates it finds unattractive.

*In September 1970 Charlie Montgomery, a non-Communist supported by the insurgent electricians' journal *Flashlight* was nominated for the Scottish executive seat. In October he was expelled for his part in a demonstration against the Scottish Joint Industrial Board (a body with union backing). Re-instated by the High Court in December, he defeated the incumbent, Bill Blairford by 4,201 to 3,589. The executive ordered a re-run because of 'outside interference', and a third candidate appeared, splitting the vote and returning Blairford to power.

*In 1974 Hector Barlow, the *Flashlight* candidate for plumbing division No. 3 was elected. Head office then announced that it had failed to stamp correctly a pre-paid envelope for Southern Ireland members, and a re-run was ordered. Barlow won again, but this time had to overcome a third candidate.

*In 1974 executive members from divisions 1 and 5 died. Despite protest, elections were postponed until 1977, when rules-revision conference abolished the Irish division (No. 1). The division 5 election was won by a full-time official.

*In 1975 Fred Gore, standing for a southern executive seat, was abruptly faced with a demand for £2,300 legal costs. These arose legitimately enough from an earlier election in which Gore tried to take the union to court for having added without permission to his manifesto a warning against Communist 'interference'. He just managed to raise the money, but if not he could have been knocked out of the election for being in arrears.

*In 1977, the election for the big plumbing division in north England was critical, because its seat could tip the balance on the executive — which then contained three left-wingers and two waverers. The day before a result was due, the executive met in emergency session to hear that Chapple had failed to send 893 ballot papers to plumbers in the head-office branch who counted as northern members: a re-run was called. Eventually, this was won by the leadership's candidate, with an amplified warning about the possibilities of Communism. (But in the meantime the rules-revision conference had settled control of the executive by giving votes to the general secretary and the plumbers' secretary.)

*In 1978 the left-winger Harold Best stood for re-election, and was rather surprisingly defeated (4,147 to 3,712) by W.P. Hayes, an associate-director of a big contracting firm called Bailey's. Although it is normal practice for ballot papers to be sent to members' homes, Best complained that the 473 papers for Bailey's branch had been sent to the place of work. Given the punctilio displayed in other cases, a re-run might have been commanded, but instead the union's solicitors were consulted, and (according to the minutes) advised 'on balance . . . that the Executive Council should not declare the election void'. There had been no complaint from any Bailey's members, and the result could only have been affected if practically all the Bailey's members had voted one way and been entirely wrongly recorded. (Only 29 per cent of members had returned ballots in the election as a whole.) The suggestion that a re-run was required only by an imperfection such as 'might affect or had materially affected the result' seems reasonable — but in the earlier case of the plumbers' ballots its application is hard to verify, because the executive ordered a re-run before any count had been announced.

*In March 1979 Wyn Bevan, a Labour councillor, stood for the South Wales and West seat against five other candidates: under the single transferable vote system he got 3,166 votes, and the second candidate, a Mr Crabb, got 2,467. In October the executive were presented with solicitor's advice to the effect that there 'appeared to be breaches of rule so far as canvassing of support was concerned by one or more of the candidates or others on their behalf, and also evidence of interference in the election by non-members, particularly by the distribution of leaflets.' If the executive were satisfied there was a breach of rule, it was their task to decide whether it had

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materially affected the result. What had happened was that Billy Williams, the Socialist Workers' Party candidate, had put out leaflets suggesting members should vote Williams 1 and Bevan 2. The executive decided this had changed the result: a fairly remarkable calculation, since Williams for all his enthusiastic and illicit SWP leafletting came bottom with 919 votes. Only 270 of these went on transfer to Bevan, and 212 others were split between three other candidates, so there would not have been enough to move Mr Crabb from second place to first place.

Nonetheless, a re-run was ordered, and although there were further complaints of interference — this time from articles in the Swansea press — Bevan was elected again, and confirmed by the executive. Five more executive seats come up for re-election this year, and the process will be interesting to watch.

THE PICTURE is not one of corruption, but neither does it fit the account of a union 'more democratic than most'. On the contrary, the appearance is of a union leadership able to make the jack of spades jump out of a rulebook and squirt cider in almost anyone's ear. One of the richest statements of EETPU philosophy emerged from a 1976 inquiry into allegations that Harold Best, running against Chapple for the general secretaryship, had canvassed support from the Communist party: 'Anything not provided for in the rule-book in an election period is outside the rules'. (Best is still complaining that the inquiry found him guilty without allowing him to speak, challenge the evidence or appeal.)

There is nothing illegitimate in running a union by the rulebook: nor is Chapple necessarily to blame if his footwork is faster than that of his opponents. But neither is that, necessarily, the point. The evidence suggests that what Chapple has built up is a highly centralised union, in which dissent — perceived always as having an ulterior motive — is rarely encouraged. A case, perhaps, can be made for union organisation along such highly disciplined lines — though the role such a union can rightly play in Labour policy-making might be questioned. But this case, now, must stand or fall in its own terms; it cannot drive blanket justification from a Communist vote rigging scandal that was dealt with nearly 20 years ago.

RACE
Mike Phillips

Have we just witnessed the birth of a British civil rights movement?

Objects of a liberal fantasy

ON THE LAST SUNDAY in June a number of Asians and West Indians held a meeting at Conway Hall, and announced that they had formed an umbrella organisation which was to be the start of a 'civil rights' campaign in Britain. They claimed to represent a great number of black organisations (sixty), and by implication the whole of the immigrant population. The tone of their press statement was confident and aggressive. They pointed out that this was the first time Asians and West Indians had participated in a common organisation, and that their support was 'broadly based'. One of the organisers, 'a Hackney activist', Patrick Kodikara, was quoted as saying: 'Black people cannot postpone unity any longer': and the new organisation issued a call for 'non co-operation' with the police.

The whole event made for sexy headlines. The organisers had excluded whites and the press. They had attacked the police. They had used the term 'civil rights', which evoked exciting memories of the 1960s in the USA. It came in the wake of disturbance over large scale immigration raids, over the use of the sus law and the Special Patrol Group. Memories of the Bristol riot were still fresh. In addition, the Commission for Racial Equality had just called for the formation of a black civil rights organisation; and, in some quarters, this lent greater credence to the aims and existence of such a body.

Newspaper editorials attacked or defended the tactics and goals of the 'black people's Convention'. The CRE criticised its 'non co-operation' policy — as did Home Secretary Willie Whitelaw in a major speech the following weekend. From the attention lavished upon the event it would have been easy to believe that we were witnessing the birth of a new mass movement.

The ethnic press tended to underplay the event or, having read the nationals, exerted itself to be dismissive. 'The young', wrote the *West Indian World*, 'are all familiar with this kind of rhetoric.' Tassaduq Ahmed, editor of *The Asian*, commented: 'It's a good idea, but they're claiming to be an umbrella before they've done anything to actually organise the thing.' This was a view shared by a number of participants. 'The church groups didn't turn up', said Lewisham councillor Russell Profitt, 'the Rastas didn't turn up, the Asian youth movements weren't there, neither were any of the women's groups, or the Panafricanists, or the *Race Today* lot, or any of the projects that organise independently, like the black bookshops, and information centres. What I wonder is, who's under the umbrella?' Another participant said it was 'just like one of those CRE conferences, the same faces, only without the CRE. It's hard to understand why all these reporters are making such a fuss.'

If the media overestimated the Convention's importance, it was an inevitable result of their limited knowledge of the social and political organisation of the black community. This isn't surprising: most immigrant organisations have an intense distrust of the media, and tend to keep their activities private. Excluding whites and the media from the Convention was part of a style extensively practised by immigrant organisations, at Asian youth conferences and Africa Liberation Day celebrations, for instance. The Convention was simply signalling to other immigrants that it was to be taken seriously; and the release of a statement immediately afterwards occasioned some hilarity. 'What nice teeth they had', wrote the *West Indian World,* 'smiling at the white man's camera and threatening them.'

IN RECENT YEARS all the political parties (except the National Front), have been trying to engage the loyalty of the black population. In February, for example, the Labour Party issued an Advice Note to local parties, which pointed out that blacks were cynical about the usefulness of supporting the party, and urged action to reverse this trend. The Note proposed, among other things, to organise a major national consultation on race and ethnic relations, and to instruct all NEC policy committees and study groups to bear in mind the effects of their recommendations on the ethnic communities. Constituency Labour Parties should work alongside black rights groups, on 'issues such groups choose to highlight'; establish workshops and discussion groups with members of local ethnic minority groups; and reflect the multi-racial society in party political broadcasts, photos, posters and graphics. A monitoring group should be set up at Head Office, to be serviced by a Black Liaison Officer.

The initiative was welcomed by blacks in the Labour Party. But if the recommendations are ever implemented, they may turn out to be much too late to suit the case: not because of black 'cynicism', but because black political consciousness has evolved, in relative isolation, to the point where black support will cost a lot more than what is being offered. While whites have been waiting for versions of their own institutions to emerge, the blacks have been working out their own form of

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politics, based on a specific view of the circumstances of immigrant life.

The Black Power movement of the late 1960s spawned a wide variety of 'self-help' projects — bookshops, hostels, information and arts centres, educational experiments and so forth. They often received funds from the state, but whites who tried to set up similar models were frequently puzzled and frustrated when they didn't work. It was almost impossible for the government or the Commission for Racial Equality to obtain any general agreement among black organisations, because there were so many autonomous groups, all orbiting around a core of intransigents, whose primary commitment was the rejection of even a semblance of white control. Bodies such as the Indian Workers Association and the Standing Conference of Pakistani Organisations were mainly preoccupied with rights in the workplace and unionisation, and with immigration case work and other legal matters. They could not have provided an overall unifying focus. And older organisations such as the West Indian Standing Conference, which tried to provide an 'umbrella' of sorts, declined an influence during the 1970s and simply held meetings or issued protests from time to time.

The emergence of the Asian Youth Movements as important organisers, paralleled by the anti-'sus' campaigns among West Indians, added an element of violent unpredictability — confirmed by the rise of the Anti Nazi League and, eventually, by the Bristol riot. Negotiation was impossible: politicians began looking for ways to stabilise the situation' The Commission for Racial Equality had no doubts about its own unsuitability as an agent for channelling black protest into constitutional paths. It looked to the United States for ideas.

In fact, it had been holding discussions since the mid-1970s with US organisations concerned with ethnic minorities — and after a while a number of blacks in Britain had begun to join in. At the beginning of this year, for instance, some delegates sponsored by Birmingham University, the CRE, the West Indian Standing Conference and the Caribbean Teachers' Association went to the States, on their second trip in three months, to confer with the National Urban League and other organisations concerned with inner city black welfare and education.

Evidently, the Conway Hall black people's convention drew much of its inspiration from these transatlantic discussions. The West Indian Standing Conference was one of the sponsors, and the statements issued afterwards had an American ring to them. Equally significant is the composition of the steering committee of the new organisation (now called the National Council of Afro Asian Organisation): apart from members of the WISC and the barristers Sibghat Kadri and Rudy Narayan, it consists largely of people who work, or used to work, for Community Relations Councils. This is a fairly narrow base within the black community, which omits the other traditional strands of political organisation.

BUT WHY SHOULDN'T IT serve as a catalyst for a civil rights campaign, despite its narrow base? Immigrant organisations are fragmented because they represent different groups with differing interests at different stages of development; and there are specific issues which unite them all — such as 'sus', immigration law and education.

To begin with, the comparison with the US civil rights campaign is beside the point. For that was inspired by the interests of a black group which had a power base within the black community — within its churches, its colleges, its businesses, and which had a physical and electoral grasp of specific territories. There's a wide world of difference between inheriting the status of the leader of the Southern Baptist Church, with generations of resources, tradition, powerful organisation, and real estate behind it, and being a community worker in London, whose wages are paid by the CRE. This is not to sneer at such folk. It is merely to suggest that they are the objects of a liberal fantasy. It would, for instance, be highly convenient and desirable for the government, of whatever political colour, to be able to locate a leadership which could be negotiated with, and which could deliver certain goods. This would pre-empt the leftist and black nationalist 'exploitation' of race issues, and create clear constitutional channels through which protests and benefits could be sent in either direction. This is already a well established pattern in the United States. Given the CRE's certain knowledge of what a politically and financially insecure base such a body would have, it would be astonishing if David Lane's projected 'civil rights' organisation were not intended to function in precisely this fashion.

The call for 'non co-operation' with the police is an obstacle to such happy accord — but not a surprising development. The new organisation exists, after one meeting, only on paper, and somehow has to buy credibility with the 'politicals'. Its actual style remains one which implies negotiation with a central power, and involves 'representatives' who can't be directly appointed by an electorate — thus keeping blacks at two removes from the political process. The fact that blacks have been finding their way from organisations such as the Indian Workers' Association to the more direct activities of the Asian youth movements and the 'sus' campaigns suggests that the majority of immigrants are moving away from 'representation' of this kind.

At the Conway Hall meeting, one of the most popular speeches came from a mixed race youth, who expressed anger that the drift of previous speeches had been about acceptability, and declared that the meeting should get on with deciding what blacks wanted without reference to white reactions. If the Convention did nothing else, it did illustrate precisely the black desire for a specific and recognised share in political life. Westminster certainly cannot fulfil this desire. But in the last decade all the different strands of black organisation have tried to carve out a power base in local politics.

As the rights campaigns have spread, the black organisations have learnt techniques and collected energies which are being used to move the focus of their activities on to a different level. Having fought for control of the services which blacks use, they are now limbering up to fight for control of decision-making about those services. This is a trend which is matched by the implications of Labour's Advice Note, and by the Tory anxiety to recruit black businessmen; but these are baits blacks will be wary of accepting, if only because repeated disappointments have made thems ceptical of anything other than concrete benefits. On the other hand, it is hard to see the political mainstream yielding very much to blacks except in return for clear electoral goods.

One body which has a base and which might yield up both is the Standing Conference of AfroCaribbean and Asian Councillors. At the beginning of the year they circulated a questionnaire to councils in Greater London to find out what they were doing about racial disadvantage. The letter urged local councils to adopt 'a statement which affirms that it will do all in its power to ensure equal opportunity in Council employment, irrespective of race, sex and creed'; that a mechanism for monitoring such a policy should be set up; and that a separate council committee should be set up to oversee the work of officials responsible for implementing council policy on improving race relations, as outlined in the 1976 Act.

Less than half the councils bothered to reply, and of those more than half provided answers which were 'dangerously short of what is required'. The Afro Asian Councillors followed the letter with a series of recommendations arising from the replies, and which bear a strong resemblance to the Labour Party Note: that the London Boroughs Association should hold a meeting to discuss the needs of the ethnic minorities, and ways of improving services to them; that trade unions play a far more active role in demanding equal rights by urging the adoption of monitoring procedures; that a team of officers should be established in each chief executive's office, to work with all departments on ethnic minority involvement; that equal opportunity policies should be adopted and monitored; that local councils should hold discussions with all interested parties to create a clear local strategy on race relations; and that the government should launch a major 'ethnic programme' to meet such needs.

These recommendations may not receive any more widespread support than the directives of a national organisation. But it does constitute a clear set of guidelines around which the black electorate in specific wards can begin to mobilise. And it is likely to deliver more in the way of direct involvement in the political power structure than anything else thought of so far.

Roger Woddis

Recessional

'We are beginning to see a glimmer of success.' — Mrs Thatcher.

God of our fathers, uncontrolled,
Lord of the stretching workless line,
Who multiplies a millionfold
The haunted dreams of Frankenstein —
Lord God of Boasts, in days not yet
Let them forget — let them forget!

The tumult and the angry cries
May seem to tear the House apart;
Still all their fervent 'noes' and 'ayes'
Will not upset the apple-cart.
Lord God of Boasts, in days not yet
Let them forget — let them forget!

The candy mountains melt away,
The vision is consumed by fire:
The promises of yesterday
Are ashes on the funeral-pyre.
If such success is our reward,
Be swift to send us failure, Lord!

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Must defence be nuclear?

The strength of feeling among Labour Party members over the question of nuclear disarmament was confirmed this week when it was reported that 130 out of 497 resolutions put forward for this year's Labour Party conference concerned some aspect of the nuclear arms race. In last week's New Statesman Labour defence spokesman William Rodgers presented his case. Below, Robin Cook, Labour MP for Edinburgh Central, argues that Cruise missiles are thoroughly unsuitable for the proper defence of Britain. The series will be continued in coming weeks with contributions from figures as diverse as Frank Allaun MP and General Sir John Hackett.

TO BEGIN WITH the common area of agreement: as long as Europe is divided into two armed camps, there is for Britain no convincing alternative to membership of the Western Alliance. The logic of history, geography and common political structures would leave us no escape from a conflict. Moreover the Soviet Union is now incomparably the single most potent military power in Europe. We know that NATO was first conceived as much as a means of imposing internal coherence on Western Europe as a league against an external threat; but if it had not been cobbled together in the 1940s, it would have been necessary to invent something similar in the course of the next two decades to handle the emergence of the Soviet Union both as a European power and as a global superpower. British withdrawal from NATO would leave Germany the dominant influence in the European pole of the alliance. It must be doubtful whether this would be in our own interest and it would certainly not be in the interests of detente as an enhanced role for Germany within NATO would impel the satellite states to support the Warsaw Pact with genuine enthusiasm.

However among alliance members we now rank eleventh in terms of income per head and we plainly cannot continue to furnish the alliance with its second largest navy, its second largest expeditionary force, its sole reinforcement capability for the Northern Flank *and* one of only two nuclear deterrants committed to the alliance. We must choose among these roles and the nuclear role is the obvious candidate for liquidation, not least because there is an urgent need to counter the renewed emphasis which is being placed on nuclear warfare by the NATO establishment.

The proper defence of Britain is one which could offer sufficient resistance to make aggression unattractive to the other side, but does not so heighten the level of military confrontation as to aggravate the probability of a conflict. The Cruise missile does not fit this bill.

In the first place it is a new weapons system in a Europe which is already crammed with far too many systems. Its guidance system is the latest in a long line of technological breakthroughs that have provided the arms race with its momentum. The Russians do not at present possess a long range Cruise missile but if NATO deploys such weapons they are certain to develop their own version, at which point the scientists will no doubt come up with yet another novelty which we must acquire to maintain our technological lead. We can only escape from this competitive spiral if the West is willing to demonstrate restraint by not forcing the pace of technological competition.

The other reason for rejecting the Cruise missile is that it has nothing to do with deterrence. Pinpoint precision is unnecessary if the target is a city and is only desirable if it is a specific objective such as a bridge, a marshalling yard, or a cross-roads. In the nature of transport networks such facilities are generally found next to major population centres and cannot be destroyed without substantial civilian casualties, or 'collateral damage' as we are known to the military. Hence the wistful complaint of the US General that 'German towns are only two kilotons apart'.

The danger is that once we pretend that such weapons are directed at legitimate military targets, it becomes more tempting to contemplate their use. The pitfall is well demonstrated in Bill Rodger's own article which submits that renunciation of nuclear weapons is not qualitatively different from renunciation of all weapons, an argument which logically implies that nuclear weapons are not qualitatively different. So a Cruise missile is merely one in a range of options available for blowing up the enemy. Bill Rodgers is an urbane and cultured man. Manifestly a weapon which seduces such a man to this conclusion is as dangerous as any that the enemy may deploy.

The tag of 'unilateralist' has now become attached to those of us who have campaigned against the deployment of Cruise missiles. This does some violence to the historical origins of the term, as traditionally a unilateralist has been one who opposed the retention by Britain of an independent deterrent. Apparently the whole Labour Party, including its Front Bench, now shares that opposition. Yet even while supporting the new common policy some members insist on describing themselves as multilateralists to distinguish themselves from the rest of us.

The really infuriating aspect of this neat distinction is the smug implication that only they are committed to achieving international disarmament. Currently the most exciting international initiative in disarmament is the campaign for a nuclear free zone from Poland to Portugal to which E. P. Thompson has made such a distinguished contribution. By contrast the official multilateralists have to live with the guilty knowledge that disarmament discussions are at an impasse not because of Soviet intransigence but because of American failure to deliver on the SALT II Treaty which has already been negotiated. Here it is impossible not to note that Bill Rodgers' recent pamphlet was published by a body rejoicing in the title The Labour Committee for Transatlantic Understanding. In principle I see nothing objectionable in a committee with the modest aim of assisting the British people to an understanding of US defence policy, but we can reasonably inquire how many pamphlets it has published which convey to the US people the urgent desire of Europe for ratification of SALT II. Is Transatlantic Understanding a two-way street?

MEANWHILE BACK HOME the government peruses a robust policy of aggressive militarism without effective challenge. There is for instance their commitment to creating a Rapid Deployment Force, ready to go anywhere, at anytime and fight anyone — denounced by a retired Chief of Defence Staff as 'military poppycock'.

Then there is the increasing ambivalence of government statements on chemical warfare. Francis Pym has now initiated a review of British policy 'to discover whether there are means by which we can deter the use of chemical weapons'. This move coincides with renewed interest in chemical weapons in Washington and there appears to be a real danger that we are about to witness nerve gas emerging as yet another option in the swelling range of 'flexible response' retained by NATO. The tragedy is that such a development would end a decade in which both sides have maintained a moratorium on the production of chemical weapons, and would extinguish such lingering hope as remains of agreement to a ban on them similar to the Biological Weapons convention of 1972.

On arms sales, Lord Strathcona, Minister of State for Defence, has declared: 'We have an instinctive feeling that we would wish to sell unless there was a compelling reason not to.' They are moved by such instinctive feelings towards such countries as Indonesia, Philippines and South Korea, where they market the growing range of counter-insurgency equipment developed for the army in Northern Ireland. While mouthing platitudes about their commitment to the defence of democracy, our military establishment has pioneered a fast-selling line in the technology which police states require to snuff out dissent.

Why then is the sole pamphlet to come from our senior defence spokesman since the election discharged against the defence policy of the Left? Why is the Tory Government not reeling under a volley of pamphlets from the same pen denouncing their traffic in arms, deriding their interventionary force and challenging their ambitions for chemical weaponry?

In a recent television broadcast Bill Rodgers referred to the complicated questions of judgment that arise over the replacement of Polaris and added that to some extent these 'should be above party politics'. It appears to me inevitable that the wide gulf in philosophy between the two major parties should find expression in different defence policies and desirable that the electorate should be presented with a clear choice between alternative defence programmes. And I doubt whether it is possible to hold the view that defence should be lifted above the ruck of party politics while remaining a party political spokesman on it.

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Northern Diary

I'm a bit of a landlubber myself, but if anyone else happens to be rowing around the Irish Sea about seven miles beyond the Mersey Bar lightship, I advise them to look out for the MV Gilbert J Fowler (an aptly named vessel as will become clear). On the right day you may see a bevy of besuited gentlemen trying their hands at quoits and other deck games. They will also be sipping wine and stretching little fingers as they nibble away at the canapes. But be warned — don't sail in for a closer look unless, that is, you don't mind your nostrils being assailed by a fearful stench.

The Fowler is the flag ship for the North West Water Authority's fleet sewage carriers — used daily to disperse effluent in the Irish Sea. Every so often she is joined on her 16-hour dumping trip by assorted dignitaries (the next trip is 18 August). These gentlemen usually board her at Latchford Locks on the Manchester ship-canal two hours after she has left Davyhulme sewage works with a full payload. Already on board is a firm of caterers ('ordures, gentlemen, please'?) to dispense the food and drink. As the guests enjoy their 5 o'clock swill the Fowler's tanks open up to gush forth 3,000 tons of a fruitier vintage.

I was far from envious when I learned about this jolly little leisure cruise. But what I do want to know — especially after the North West Water Authority's last expensive nonsense of buying a personalised number plate for its chairman — is just who is footing the bill for these merry gents as they wine and dine their way up shit creek.

Granada TV's recently-opened Liverpool studio has run into a spot of bother through its use of Exchange Flags — the grand square behind the city's town hall which makes a handy open-air stage.

Some po-faced employers in Exchange Buildings, overlooking the Flags, have complained about the showbiz — presumably because it diverts office-workers from the tedium of their desks. But those who complain don't know they're born. They should read *Liverpool 1921-22* — an excellent contemporary pamphlet by proletarian writer George Garrett which has been republished this month. In it Garrett describes how Exchange Flags 'had always been forbidden ground to the city's working men. To suggest the unemployed meet there sounded sacrilegious.' But one September Wednesday in 1921, 10,000 unemployed and exasperated men congregated across the Flags to start a campaign of resistance well-documented in Garrett's writings.

Pinned to their lapels they wore their yellow labour exchange cards. Jackets were adorned with rows of war medals — or pawn tickets to show how medals had become meal-tickets. Inside the town hall the corridors were jammed tight with queues of police carrying the truncheons that were to be put to bloody effect several days later after a succession of marches and meetings. Garrett's vivid account of how this mass display of anger grew into organised resistance to the means test, payment of relief in kind, and test work should set a stirring example to today's multiplying dole queues.

Garrett was a remarkable figure. A burly Liverpool stoker, he impressed George Orwell as he guided the old Etonian in some of his researches on the road to Wigan Pier. Garrett was an activist in Merseyside's Labour movement who jumped ship in New York to join the Wobblies, returned to fight the battles of the unemployed, and then helped found and write and act for Merseyside's Left Theatre (later Unity Theatre). Garrett, so local anecdote has it, was less impressed by Orwell, complaining the fellow didn't buy his share of rounds. *Liverpool 1921-22* has been republished by Alan O'Toole, the former Liverpool roadsweeper, 'now promoted to binman', who several years ago helped find and refurbish with a memorial the Liverpool grave of Robert Tressell. Copies (70p inc. postage) can be obtained from Alan, at 25 Tumilty Avenue, Bootle or News from Nowhere Bookshop, 100 Whitechapel, Liverpool.

Before we leave Exchange Flags I ought to remind the NUM's Mick McGahey just who owns this historic square and the massive office blocks surrounding it. The miners do — through CIN (Coal Industry Nominees) Properties, which manages an investment portfolio for the Coal Board's superannuation and pension fund. Mick sits on CIN's management committee and really ought to know what policies are being upheld in the miners' names by CIN's local representative. This gentleman told me rather proudly last week about some upstarts who tried to hold a May Day demonstration on Exchange Flags earlier this year. 'We have no hesitation in using the mounted police to clear the square. We'll quell it by any means we have to. It is the only private square in Liverpool.' Well, what about it Mick? As landlord why not invite Merseyside's record 107,000 unemployed to gather on the Flags this September to repeat a little bit of history? The TV cameras wouldn't have far to go.

I had proposed this week to send the following telex to Sir Keith Joseph as he plays pass the parcel with the Post Office:

> ESSENTIALEST UNTAKE DECISION CLOSING LIVERPOOL PUBLIC TELEX OFFICE STOP ELSE SPLASH YOUR INCOMPETENCE STOP SPEEDIEST FULLEST REPLY STOP OTHERWISE UPFOLLOW MINISTERIAL STAKE IN CLEFT STICK IMPORTERS STOP UPSTUFF THAT IN PIPE.

On the grounds that it is 'grossly cost-ineffective', the North West Telecommunications Board is proposing to close the Liverpool public telex — all for the sake of £4,500, its yearly loss.

Public usage is low, I admit, sometimes only two to three calls a day — although you'll walk a long way to see the telex advertised anywhere. But in the light of the Post Office's gigantic profits—£375 million in the last financial year—the occasional subsidised public service wouldn't go amiss.

However, my plans to emulate Boot of the Beast by acquiring a gross of cleft sticks may be nipped in the bud by the Board's sweet reasonableness. As I declared the NS's interest in the matter — without the public telex the copy for this diary might have been stranded up some Lands End railway siding — Eric Jackson, controller of services, mused: 'I'm just wondering, as you speak, whether there are ways we could keep the service open'. To help him muse, fraternal greetings to me should be sent via public telex No. 627333. A free cleft stick for every supporter.

When the Appeal Court releases a prisoner on bail, the success of his subsequent appeal is a foregone conclusion. So I can happily and confidently predict that Peter Jeonney, the Merseyside youth whose encounter with Merseyside's K Division police last year has been chronicled in the NS (24 August 1979 and 6 June 1980), will have his innocence publicly proven next week. Peter has just been released from Walton Prison and his appeal will be heard on Monday. He had started a three-year sentence after being wrongfully charged with assaulting three police officers. Police witnesses said he ran between two prone officers kicking them in the head. In fact, he did no such thing. But initial police inquiries somehow managed to miss the many witnesses who could give the lie to the police version.

Jeonney, as we reported, had to be taken from Huyton police station to a local hospital for treatment to his fearful injuries. These were inflicted, he says, by interrogating officers and included cigarette burnings on the legs and a beating with a knotted towel. Jeonney is now the fifth person in nine months, accused of assaulting K Division police, to have the sentence set aside or the charges dropped after investigations by outside forces. In all cases those charged alleged extreme brutality by Merseyside police.

I await with interest the DPP's decision on the fate of the authors of the police evidence against Jeonney. And it might be timely for Merseyside police committee to demand a final roll call of K Division officers who have been transferred, suspended, demoted, dismissed and prosecuted in the past year. I am told by those who know that they are remarkable statistics.

It's not often you see a chauffeur-driven bishop gliding down your local motorway. So, naturally, I cast more than a passing glance at the 2 litre Cortina GL as it sped past me on the M62 carrying its passenger, resplendent in purple biretta, towards Liverpool. Lo and behold, I was rewarded with a fast-disappearing view of the very latest in trendy ikons. Attached to the rear of the vehicle was a personalised number plate — BVM 1. And it doesn't stand for Blessed Victor Matthews.

Rob Rohrer

This England

Prizes: £3 book token for first entry, £2 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

Striptease dancing could not be used directly or indirectly by health authorities as a method of raising money, Lord Sandys, Captain, Yeomen of the Guard, said during the committee stage of the Health Services Bill. — *The Times* (H. East)

Efforts by Oxford University to appoint a Greek as a lecturer in classical philosophy, and an American as a research fellow in medieval siege warfare, and a Swede as a fellow in mathematics, have been met by invitations from the Department of Employment to take these vacancies to the local Job Centre and advertise them to Britain's unemployed. — *Guardian* (Terence Watson)

Thanks to our Blessed Lady and my beloved Saints, also to the officers of the General and Municipal Workers for my success in the sex discrimination case. — Personal column in Liverpool Echo (Paul Thompson)

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Alternatives to doomsday?

From Edward James

Mr Scott Newton's statement in his letter (NS 4 July) that 'a genuine relaxation of tension can come only through multilateral disarmament ...' adds nothing to the current debate that has not been repeated many times before. Most people would, no doubt, agree with him but the logic of his contention that this must be achieved by our remaining within the Atlantic alliance is, at least, debatable. The course of negotiations on disarmament over the last 35 years shows very clearly that they have foundered mainly on one single fact: that there is an utter lack of trust between the two sides of the discussion.

And why, indeed, should either side trust the other when there is little evidence that either is trustworthy? The actions of the Soviet Union both towards its own people and towards those of its neighbouring states are rightly condemned but one's right to make the condemnation must surely depend on the rectitude of one's own behaviour. There are good grounds, as E. P. Thompson suggests (NS 27 June), for believing that much of the foreign policy of the USSR is, in fact, a response to its fear for its own security in the face of apparent threat from the NATO alliance. With the appalling record of intrigue, deception, clandestine murder, sanctions busting and support for repressive regimes which go to make up no small part of British and American dealings with other nations, can we really be surprised that the Russians are reluctant to accept our assurances that our armaments are entirely defensive?

One does not need to be an expert in the subject of human relationships to know that trust breeds trust just as surely as that hypocrisy and double dealing breed mistrust. One of the surest ways of helping to bring about multilateral disarmament is to make a start in cleansing our own doorstep.

Willersley End, Top Nempnett, Winford, Bristol

Power point

From Michael Ami-Kam

Robert Wistrich's review of *Prophets in Babylon* (NS 11 July) constitutes a typical example of how history can be prostituted in the service of political fanaticism. If Jews in the Arab lands were so persecuted and Zionism did offer them an 'escape route', why are they not grateful to Israel? How have they become 'one of the most critical and potentially explosive social problems confronting the Jewish state', as he unwisely admits?

Writing as a Sephardi Jew who has lived most of his life in both Israel and the Arab world I can attest to the simple fact that the discrimination we face in Israel is far worse than anything we experienced in Arab countries. Under Zionist-Ashkenazi rule our communities, which had flourished all over the Middle East, were flattened by cultural oppression. True, there were periods of sectarian tension and even violence in the Arab East especially after the Great War. They were demonstrably the result of Western penetration, Nazi propaganda and the destruction of the Palestinian people. It must, however, be stated firmly that these unfortunate episodes were almost insignificant compared with the persecution of religious minorities in Christendom from the Inquisition up to the holocaust.

Officially the status of non-Moslems (dhimmis) was inferior but in practice Christians and Jews were an integral part of the élite in the Moslem state, economy and culture. In contrast, those who did not subscribe to the established religion in Europe did not enjoy equal rights in practice or theory until well on into the 19th century. As for Nazism, let me remind Mr Wistrich that the Arab countries of North Africa, Syria and Lebanon were the only countries, with the honourable addition of Denmark, which did not permit the extermination of their Jewish communities and this in the face of a massive Nazi presence in the form of the Vichy Government or the German Army.

Finally, Mr Wistrich's callous attitude towards our human rights in Israel is exemplified by his use of the derogatory term 'Oriental Jews' invented by Ashkenazi, East European settlers as a way of dismissing indigenous Jewish people as somehow 'merely native'. From our point of view this sort of thing crystallises the discrimination the Sephardi Jewish majority is up against in Israel and we regard it as a form of anti-semitism directed at Sephardi Jewry because of its close historic links with the Arab peoples and culture.

Mrs Woolfson's book is a welcome beginning to a serious analysis of the position of Sephardi Jews in Israel where communal relations have now become so volatile that failure to acknowledge the legitimacy of Sephardi grievances and to take steps to remedy them could lead to the disintegration of Israel.

25 Slades Gardens, Enfield, Middx

Suitable saviour?

From Stuart Holland

Philip Kleinman (NS 4 July) reads too much into my article on Ben Bella (NS 20 June). He also sees too little in the man himself and what he stands for. Ben Bella in fact became President of Algeria after seven years of civil war; the death of a million people; the exodus of nine-tenths of the *colons* in the summer of 1962, and the virtual collapse of the country's economic and administrative structures. Of some ten million Algerians, two million were reckoned to be unemployed, with a quarter of a million in Algiers alone.

To imply that his government put words before action ignores the massive scale of the problems which it faced. In practice, in some three years, it expropriated key French interests; supported self-management in agriculture; espoused non-alignment rather than either of the super-blocs; avoided simplist pan-Arabism, and actively supported liberation movements in the rest of Africa.

Ben Bella's political opponents survived him, since he let them live, yet they brought no charge of treason or denial of human rights against him during his 15 years of imprisonment, since none would have survived the courts or public opinion.

The main point of my article was not to promote Ben Bella as a potential saviour of an Algeria now in renewed economic and political crisis, but to show that he symbolises policies and achievements from the first years of the Algerian revolution which are of increasing interest to both Africans and Arabs today. This claim has more basis today than speculation on what fate might have befallen his opponent Mohammed Boudiaf had he not escaped.

House of Commons, London SW1

Immigration policy

From Michael Johnson

We share wholeheartedly Amrit Wilson's conviction that British Governments have increasingly institutionalised racism and sexism through tightening immigration, race, and welfare state policies (NS 11 July). However, while we are in substantial agreement with Ms Wilson's exposé of the worsening situation, we feel that it falls short of entering into a debate on the nature of an alternative immigration/race policy, or how this could be brought into effect. The United Nations Association has called for an inquiry not only into the present operation of the immigration rules and procedures — including the notorious Immigration Intelligence Unit — but also into the actual premises of immigration policy itself. The only suitable enquiry would therefore be a Royal Commission. Furthermore, this in itself would not guarantee an alternative policy, and this is why we shall be undertaking an in-depth study of the transition from relatively 'harsh' to more liberal and equitable laws in Canada early next year.

United Nations Association Youth Council, 3 Whitehall Court, London, SW1

Theory & experience

From Alex Callinicos

I was depressed, but not surprised, to see that Robin Blackburn (NS 18 July) failed to confront the issues of substance I tried to raise in my contribution to the debate on 'Theory and Experience'. In that piece (NS 27 June) I tried to explain why I thought that the version of historical materialism embraced by Perry Anderson in *Arguments within English Marxism* was inadequate. Blackburn does not even attempt to answer my criticisms, resorting instead to the 'facile name-calling' which he accuses me of committing. Such behaviour reflects more on his 'intellectual standards' than on mine.

I was nonetheless interested to learn that Tom Nairn's analysis of the British state is no mere personal eccentricity but is endorsed by his fellow editors of *New Left Review*. Do they also follow him in concluding that the British working class is a spent force supplanted by the Scottish National Party as the gravest threat to the status quo?

Blackburn appears to believe that my main complaint against *NLR* is that it is not 'subject to the direction of the SWP'. This is not so — *International Socialism*, the SWP theoretical journal, has been in business as long as the *Review* and has made, in my opinion, a rather more substantial contribution to our understanding of the contemporary world. Nor do I object to *NLR*'s importation of the work of continental Marxists, merely its uncritical enthusiasms for them. No, it is *NLR*'s disdain for political activity in *any* form which dismays me. Blackburn looks forward to 'a more robust and audacious Anglo-Marxism', yet it is clear that for him such a prospect means simply greater theoretical sophistication, not a wider working-class audience for the revolutionary socialism to which he and Anderson are formally committed. Such a stance serves to reinforce the separation of theory and practice which the classical Marxists strove to abolish.

To say this is not to invoke 'a desiccated subleninism' or 'ouvrierist philistinism' — indeed, what Marsixm needs is further development, not the retreat into the evolutionism of Plekhanov and Kautsky which Anderson and Blackburn now seem to advocate — but merely to remind socialist intellectuals of what they seem only too ready to forget, that Marxists are in business to change the world, not just to interpret it.

St Peter's College, Oxford

Socialism of fools

From Christopher Hitchens

My thanks to all those who were interested enough to join in the argument about Zionism and anti-semitism. To those who criticised me for not mentioning certain complex and historical aspects of the debate, my apologies. A brief, argumentative article cannot cover everything. To those who say there is no problem, I recommend the 'journal' of the British Anti-Zionist Organisation, Volume Two, Number Three, which has just reached me. Discussing David Aaronovitch it says, in bold type, 'Remember his name, remember his face'. A helpful photograph accompanies the 'article'. Finally, to those who perceptively notice that I am also an opponent of Zionism — you have utterly missed the point.

New Statesman

Information wanted

Harry Midgley: information about the once Chairman of the Northern Ireland Labour Party and former Unionist Cabinet Minister, particularly about his links with the British Labour movement.

Graham Walker, 42 Keppel Road, Chorlton, Manchester

Songs of the Labour movement: songs of the depression, parodies of popular songs, fully fledged folk songs, songs composed for particular strikes, marches or demonstrations, slogans and chants, songs circulated within political parties or trade unions, and so on.

Tish Stubbs and Sam Richards, 6 South Street, Totnes, Devon

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

Nigel Cross

Hard Lines

Days of Wrath by ROBERT KATZ *Granada* £8.95
Fortune's Hostages by CAROLINE MOOREHEAD *Hamish Hamilton* £8.95
Political Crime in Europe by BARTON L. INGRAHAM *University of California* £13.50
The State in Western Europe edited by Richard Scase *Croom Helm* £12.95 & £6.50

By kidnapping Aldo Moro in March 1978, the Red Brigades, in the words of their imprisoned leader Renato Curcio, were attacking 'the heart of the state'. The West waited in trepidation — would the attack succeed, would the state allow itself to be blackmailed by the Red Brigades? Uncharacteristically, it seemed, the Italians stood firm; a hard line was maintained even though the victim was the leader of the ruling party and President elect. The Italian Communist Party (PCI) took the initiative in resisting the perceived threat to the state. To the relief of the West, democracy appeared strengthened by this refusal to surrender to Marxist-inspired terrorism. Moro was executed. *The Times* commented 'only a state strong enough to resist this kind of pressure has any chance of defeating terrorism'.

After the recovery of the state and the burial of Moro, awkward questions were raised. Was the state seriously threatened? Is terrorism a germ or a flea? Above all, which is the more valuable — the life of a human being, admitted to be innocent, or the abstract preservation of a theory of democracy? In *Days of Wrath: the Public Agony of Aldo Moro* Robert Katz has no difficulty in answering any of these questions, and he makes it clear that Moro had no difficulty either.

Even before he had been kidnapped, Moro had opposed the hard line, notably in the case of Mario Sossi, kidnapped by the Red Brigades in 1974. And in his letters from the people's prison Moro reminded the government that 'the sacrifice of the innocents in the name of an abstract principle is inadmissable'. The government and the press regarded Moro's suggestion that his life was worth bargaining for with horror. A discreditable campaign was mounted to show that Moro had, at best, been drugged or brainwashed, at worst revealed himself as a snivelling coward.

Katz has meticulously researched an angry book describing a Machiavellian Rome in which Moro battled, not so much against the Red Brigades who were his executioners, as against the Court of Appeal; the Christian Democrat/Communist alliance who had been told by a young US psychiatrist on loan from President Carter that 'it is essential to demonstrate that no man is indispensable to the viability of the nation state'. It was pointed out at the time that if Moro's bodyguards had been kidnapped and Moro killed, instead of the other way round, the Government would have had no difficulty in negotiating for their release. Although Katz shows that the PCI were the perpetrators of the hard line, he pays little attention to their reasons or to Berlinguer's assessment of what was at stake.

For 30 years, during which time Moro was Minister of Justice, Education and Foreign Affairs; Secretary, Chairman and President of his party; five times Prime Minister, the PCI had been in opposition. In 1976 their share of the vote rose to 34 per cent, just four points behind the Christian Democrats. They had become the most powerful communist party in Western Europe, and they had achieved this power through the ballot box. Their attachment to democracy became the trademark of Eurocommunism. In 1978, against the express wishes of the USA and after the miraculous diplomacy of Moro himself, the PCI and Christian Democrats agreed to form a government of 'historic compromise'.

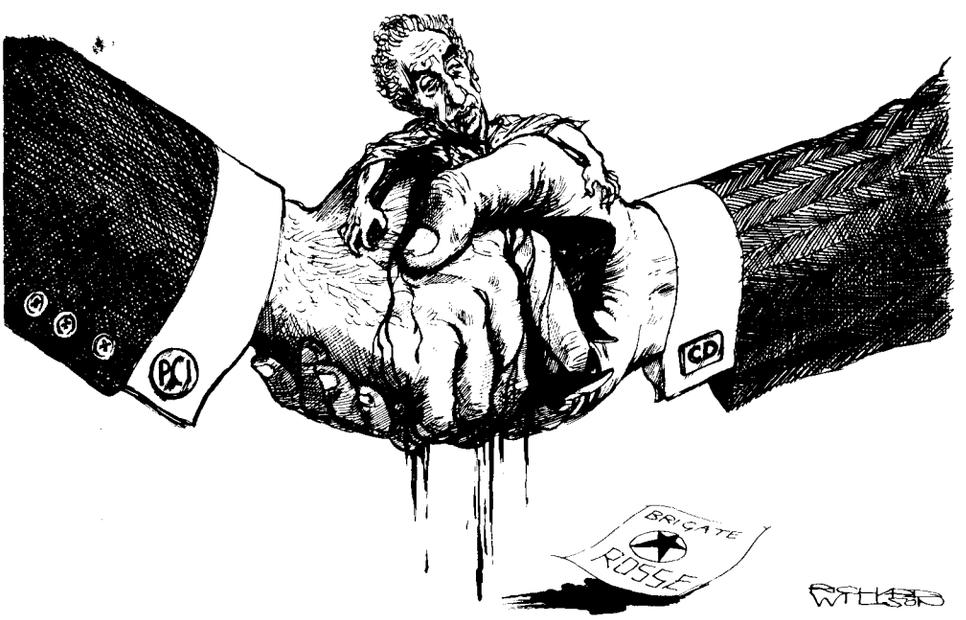
The enemies of the Red Brigades, then, were not so much Christian Democrats as Berlinguer, the PCI and Eurocommunism. Probably the majority of the Red Brigades were disaffected PCI members and their most bitter propaganda attacks were directed against their former leader.

Against this background the PCI was determined to disassociate itself from these young militant communists. Eurocommunism seemed to be at stake, as well as the life of Moro. Berlinguer would not sacrifice the efforts of the party for the life of the 61-year-old leader of the traditional opposition. Moro had performed his most important function. He had brought the PCI and Christian Democrats into alliance. Berlinguer was able to argue that it would be vandalism to destroy the edifice to save the architect. Although the Christian Democrats were personally and emotionally involved in Moro's fate, they too favoured the hard line out of anti-communism, staunch conservatism and because their years of corrupt and irresponsible power might be forgiven and absolved if they allowed their leader, on trial for their sins, to be sacrificed.

Helmut Schmidt favoured the hard line. He had just practised it in Germany and Hanns-Martin Schleyer had died in consequence. 'No other Western Government,' he had warned, 'would act very differently from the way we acted..'

'The heroes in Katz's analysis were the doves, Bettino Craxi, the Socialist Party leader, supported by Leonardo Sciascia, Guiliano Vassalli, and a handful of Christian Democrats led by Amintore Fanfani. The Pope was also a Dove, but in ineffectual opposition to the Vatican.

In attacking the hard line Katz points out that it had been decided on even before the Red Brigades had made any demands. At first they made none. Then they demanded the release of an unspecifed number of 'communist prisoners'. Craxi, negotiating on his own initiative, whittled this down to a one for one exchange. Katz was able to confirm, in a subsequent interview with the Red Brigades, that the release of one of two named prisoners, both of whom were chronically ill and imprisoned for relatively minor terrorist offences, would have been sufficient to secure Moro's release. What the Red Brigades really craved, Katz claims, was recognition that they were political revolutionaries and not common criminals.



Official negotiations would have accorded them this recognition. However, 'negotiations', said Sandro Pertini, now President of Italy in Moro's place, 'will spell the end of law and order.' Moro's body turned up a few days later in the boot of a car parked midway between the offices of theChristian Democrats and their communist partners.

The story of the Moro kidnapping, together with other major kidnapping stories of recent years, has been carefully reconstructed by Caroline Moorehead in *Fortune's Hostages*. Although it is more useful as a reference work than for its penetrating analysis, the accounts of political kidnapping tend to reinforce the thesis that the hard line, as a disincentive to terrorism is a complete failure. Between 1970 and 1977 successful kidnappings, according to Caroline Moorehead, have brought terrorists £77,000,000 in ransom and the release of 267 political prisoners. But the price society has paid for the hard line is much greater than its material loss as a result of negotiation. The Red Brigades have abandoned kidnapping as

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unprofitable; instead they have moved on to outright assassination, not only of law enforcement officers and politicians, but of businessmen, academics and journalists. In unison the Italian state has moved into the repressive phase. There are one thousand suspected terrorists in special internment centres. There is search without warrant, detainment without legal representation, arrest without trial. Special powers have been granted to General Della Chiesa to assist him in his harrassment of sympathisers.

If such repression could be characterised as 'limited' it would win the approval of Barton Ingraham who, in his scholarly treatise *Political Crime in Europe 1770-1970,* concludes that failure to employ limited measures of repression during a period of weakness is most likely to lead to dictatorship. 'Moreover the historical evidence indicates that once the threat of revolt or revolution has been effectively dispelled, periods of repression are normally followed by periods of liberalisation.'Of course Italy may be the exception to prove the rule, but it is equally likely that the Italian government has failed to observe Professor Ingraham's two major qualifications which define what he means by 'limited' repression. First, that 'the authorities should be careful to stay within the bounds of legality' and secondly, that 'repressive measures should never be taken without serious consideration being given to positive responses to the grievances which political crimes and disturbances so often reflect'.

It used to be defence of the Realm, it is now defence of the State that is supposed to motivate citizens to abandon their civil liberties in the face of an ill-defined terrorist threat. This concept of the state as master of its constituents is discussed in an illuminating series of essays, *The State in Western Europe.* Carlo Donolo is Professor of Political Sociology (the foundation course of the Red Brigades) at Salerno. His essay on the state in Italy elegantly illustrates specific causes of Italy's 'permanent crisis'. In his view Italy is the victim of the identification of state with party. 'The Christian Democratic party has "occupied" the state, transforming itself into the State party.' Clearly the PCI would be happy in the same role. The separating of party from state is vital to the solution of Italy's problems, but it seems that the Christian Democrats have emerged from the Moro affair as immovable as ever. In successive elections, local and national, they and their Socialist partners have increased their votes at the expense of the PCI. Unfortunately the Red Brigades by kidnapping Moro, far from striking at the heart of state, have strengthened its grip on Italian society. It was Mussolini who said: 'Everything for the state; nothing against the state; nothing outside the state.'

Anna Coote

Man's World

Women Workers and the Trade Unions by SARAH BOSTON *Davis-Poynter* £12.50

It was reported in the press one day in 1884 that the town of Kidderminster was 'in an uproar'. The men were all out in the streets

> perambulating ... with bands and boards on which were drawn men turning mangles and men washing and then came a procession of perambulators wheeled by men, containing infants.

Sad to say, it was not a bid to spend more time helping out at home, but a protest over the employment of women at cheap rates in the local textile industry. The demonstrators were confident that they could make their point by producing the absurd spectacle of men engaged in 'women's work'.

Ninety-one years later, it became illegal for women to be paid less than men for doing the same work. So there has been some progress. It is no longer respectable for male trade unionists to demand openly that women should stay at home and leave the paid jobs to them. Yet today, government policies are designed to encourage just that. Tory ministers — notably Patrick Jenkin — make speeches which convey the very message that the men of Kidderminster were trying to put across in 1884.

Few women are confident that the trade unions will wholeheartedly defend their right to work. For they know that men are as terrified as ever at the prospect of 'their' jobs being usurped, and it is abundantly clear that the unions are still run by men. As Sarah Boston records, women workers were organising for better pay and conditions as long ago as the 1820s and for most of the last century they have been trying to gain equal status as trade unionists. Why is it that after so much time and effort, they have gained such a derisory foothold in the labour moment? Some women are put off because the trade unions seem to be a 'man's world' geared to men's needs; and some are too busy to get involved because of their responsibilities at home. But these are symptoms, not causes.

Sarah Boston doesn't attempt to theorise, and seldom even pauses to analyse events as she records them — which is disappointing. However, her careful, factual account provides some useful clues.

In the late 19th century, women organised their own unions because men would not let them join theirs; gradually, they were absorbed into the men's organisations and this was regarded at the time as a positive achievement. Yet they found that they had simply switched from being first-class members of second-class unions to being second-class members of first-class unions. When the militant and highly successful National Federation of Women Workers, founded by Mary McArthur, voted to join the National Union of General Workers in 1920, it was swiftly submerged: the number of women officials dropped from 16 to one.

Women were relegated then to the margins of trade-union activity and they have stayed there ever since. They are still torn between a desire to be in there with the men, fighting on equal terms, and a knowledge born of bitter experience that they cannot get what they need unless they also organise separately. They hope that by their extra efforts they will win a place at the centre, but the very process of trying has been wearing a rut for them around the periphery.

Women have been marginalised, too, by the measures adopted to improve their pay. For although the trade unions have usually insisted that their goals must be achieved in direct contest with employers, and have fiercely resisted attempts to interfere with collective bargaining, there have been certain exceptions to this rule. From 1918, the lowest-paid and weakest groups of workers (of whom the majority were women) had their wages regulated by statutory bodies known as trade boards. This development was to store up serious problems for the future, as one male delegate to a 1926 TUC conference predicted:

> They [the trade boards] are not in any way encouraging a sense of responsibility among the workers and they are one of the greatest dangers and difficulties we are up against in organising the women. We have to show these people that their only means of improving their condition is by industrial organisation ...

His warning went unheeded. Wages councils (successors to the trade boards) still govern most sectors of industry where women predominate — and these remain the lowest-paid. Traditional bargaining strategy was again by-passed by the (notoriously ineffective) Equal Pay Act; and women are still seen as a separate class whose needs are not high on the agenda for negotiation.

As Sarah Boston demonstrates again and again, the aims and strategies of the trade unions were (and still are) based on two false assumptions: first, that paid employment is *real* work while domestic labour and child care are not; and second, that the latter are naturally the province of women while men have an inalienable right to whatever paid jobs are going. During two world wars, women were called to do their patriotic duties in the factories of Britain, but as soon as the men returned from the front they were dispatched back to their kitchens. In 1947, the TUC annual report announced that there was no doubt in the General Council's mind

> that the home is one of the most important spheres for a woman worker and that it would be doing a grave injury to the life of the nation if women were persuaded or forced to neglect their domestic duties in order to enter industry particularly where there are young children ...

The men of Kidderminster seemed to march again. And their ghosts still stalk the corridors of Congress House. As paid work becomes scarcer, so women's unpaid domestic labour grows magically more vital to the life and health of the nation. But somehow male trade unionists never imagine any serious increase in their own contribution to the nurturing of future generations. By insisting that this is women's work, they justify their own prior claim to paid jobs and so maintain economic power as breadwinners-in-chief. 'Let us be honest', said Pat Turner, women's organiser of the GMWU, to the 1972 TUC:

> The right to work is not generally considered a female prerogative. Women are still considered a reliable safety margin for an unreliable labour market which we can use when we have need of them and can disregard all other times.

Her words are just as true today.

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John Spurling

White Knight

English Post-Impressionism by SIMON WATNEY *Studio Vista* £30
Roger Fry by FRANCES SPALDING *Elek/Granada* £9.95

A few years ago Richard Cork made a gallant attempt to run the Vorticists as England's lost artistic revolutionaries. Now, backing an even more short-breathed and ungainly stable, Simon Watney has tried to do the same for 'English Post-Impressionism', by which he means Duncan Grant (to whose memory the book is dedicated) and Vanessa Bell, plus Sickert and his Camden Town group. Watney's claim for them is as reconcilers rather than *avant-gardistes;* he holds that they evolved 'a style which mediated the work of Cézanne, Gauguin and Cézanne (sic), as well as Picasso and Matisse, to a strong local tradition of tonal painting and mildly realist subject matter'. Thus, before the first world war, they had put bridges across the yawning gulfs between figurative and non-figurative art and between painting and design which were to divide artists so bitterly right up to our own time. It is a thesis already somewhat dated, in that the arrival of artists who don't paint at all has made those who do — figurative and abstract — seem all brothers under the skin, but its overriding disadvantage is that it takes no account of the actual work produced.

Discussed in terms of art-history, on the basis of what they aimed for and the techniques they used, the English Post-Impressionists can be made to sound like a substantial and neglected school, a genuine native alternative to the dominance of the French tradition. But the paintings themselves make any such idea wholly untenable. Certainly the Camden Towners belonged to a strong local tradition and made some attempt to paint the life around them, certainly they were influenced by the French masters; alas, the result is a lot of minor paintings whose bright colours and borrowed notions of form only serve to emphasise their provincial ambitions. As for Grant and Bell, in proportion as their borrowings were bolder and more advanced than those of the Camden Towners, so their paintings were looser and coarser: they were pleasing decorators of walls, screens and table-tops, and were mainly execrable painters on canvas.

The villain of Watney's book, the traducer of Grant and Bell in particular and of the English marriage of figurative and non-figurative art in general, is Roger Fry. His crime is to have invented and (with the help of Clive Bell) popularised the idea of 'significant form', giving authority to the distrust of subject-matter which has bedevilled the 20th century, paving the way for abstraction, Clement Greenberg, the dominance of the French and American schools and all kindred evils. And Watney accuses Fry, incidentally, of being 'unable to comprehend that passionately serious attitude towards the concept and practice of decoration which so distinguishes Grant's work in this period, together with that of Sickert, Gore, Gilman and the whole of the English Post-Impressionist movement'. The fact that Fry started the Omega Workshops and ran them to his own financial disadvantage precisely in order to harness and give scope to this attitude and, in Fry's own words, 'to develop a definitely English tradition', is glossed over; just as in the course of attacking Fry's theories Watney criticises the circularity of Clive Bell's argument (in his influential book *Art*) about 'significant form', without saying that Fry himself was the first to make that very criticism.

Fortunately, Frances Spalding's new life of Fry is on hand to clear him of all such tendentious accusations. Not only does he emerge as the White Knight he once played at Angelica Bell's twelfth birthday party — a man and an art historian of almost saintly proportions — but as the one English figure in the art-world of the early 20th century of whom we can be thoroughly proud. If he recognised Cézanne, Gauguin, Van Gogh, Matisse and later Seurat as masters and caused others to recognise them too, his only crime against British artists was to set them a standard higher than any of them (not excluding himself) proved able to match. If he arrived at a theory to account for our pleasure in the best art of all styles and periods, he did so primarily to satisfy his own voracious curiosity and enthusiasm, not to set up petty orthodoxies which should prevent living artists expressing themselves with complete freedom.

Reacting against Ruskin's moral directives, it was above all freedom that Fry wanted for art; but he also, reacting against the *fin de siècle* doctrine of art for art's sake, wanted it to have a serious place in life. The key to Fry, the son of a notable Quaker judge and trained at King's, Cambridge, as a natural scientist and believer in progress, was his intense dedication, which was channelled first into painting and then into art-criticism, instead of socialism or scientific research. Because he continued to paint and because art-criticism was by itself too constricting an occupation for his passionate intelligence, he could not rest on his first highly successful career as an up-and-coming Berenson (specialist in Old Masters, buyer for the Metropolitan Museum in New York and nearly Director of the National Gallery). His belief that the content of art consisted in its form rather than its subject-matter meant that he could only reject as inadequate most of what was being shown to and accepted by the public; but his belief that art was a crucial part of the life of any individual or society meant that he couldn't be satisfied until he had found something better.

The Post-Impressionists were for him a revelation he had been looking for, and he announced them to London and the world with all the missionary fervour for which he was famous. 'He is the centre of a whirlwind to me,' wrote Virginia Woolf; even Sickert, still dubious about Cézanne, couldn't resist Fry's hugely popular lectures: 'No sooner do I see the feet of Mr Roger Fry on the mountains, than I scamper, bleating to sit at them.' But being the man he was Fry could no more restrict himself to a single revelation than to a neat theory; hence the second Post-Impressionist exhibition (with its emphasis on living artists), hence the Omega Workshops, hence the many modifications (ignored by Simon Watney) to his original theory of form and the fact that he himself remained a figurative painter.

Frances Spalding's biography is a splendid vindication of everything Fry did and was. It adds new facts and greater detachment, especially in dealing with Fry's love for Vanessa Bell, to Virginia Woolf's 1940 biography, but it is more a tribute than a criticism to say that one would have liked Mrs Spalding's book to have contained still more of his personal life with fuller details of the tragedy of his wife's madness as well as of his relations with other women and with his children. Ideally too one would have liked coloured reproductions of some of his own paintings, particularly the remarkable portraits which Mrs Spalding herself assembled at the Courtauld four years ago. Oddly enough the only thing to be said for English Post-Impressionism is that it turned out some very decent portraits: which doesn't fit either Roger Fry's or Simon Watney's theories.

Andrew Motion

Bedroomised

The Collected Ewart 1933-1980 by GAVIN EWART *Hutchinson* £10.

Converts can usually be relied on for zeal. If Gavin Ewart is anything to go by, so can those who return to a fold they once inhabited and later abandoned. His first collection, *Poems and Songs*, appeared in 1939 and over the next 25 years he wrote only 18 poems. But in 1964 he completed a topographical sequence, *Londoners*, and has subsequently produced an extraordinarily fast-growing body of work: a poem written most days and a fattish collection published every two years or so. Simply in quantitative terms it's a remarkable achievement, and in qualitative ones it has established him as one of the foremost minor poets of his gifted generation. Apart from a few obvious examples — like 'The Larkin Automatic Car Wash' or 'The Gentle Sex' — his poems are less impressive individually than they are in bulk. And since *The Collected Ewart* is what it says it is — a collection rather than a selection — he has never appeared to better advantage. It's not just that he's unflaggingly entertaining and inventive, but that he's a remarkably compassionate writer. His facility, which might have led merely to loquaciousness or lack of discrimination, has in fact been used to express unhesitating concern.

Ewart dried up during the war for the same reason that he has written so well since: because of his indebtedness to the senior Thirties poets. He has said that experience of the army 'squashed' him, and what this seems to have meant is that having begun by adopting an identikit Auden manner, he was confronted in the early Forties with a range of subjects which made it feel inadequate. But after copying his master's voice so absolutely, he had trouble finding his own. The process didn't involve discarding his original allegiances altogether, but injecting into Auden's more discursive style a worldliness reminiscent of MacNeice. It's tempting to argue that the poem which has helped him more than any

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other to be himself is 'Bagpipe Music':

> Take me down to a Lustschloss in the year 1900,
> Give me tea on the lawn of a vicarage garden,
> Put me in a punt with all my little girl friends,
> Let the dreams grow into the leafy sex-books.
> I want a magnifying glass and a knowledge of Coptic
> And a box in the British Museum for the last performance of Hamlet.

Ewart's candour about his borrowings from other writers is an aspect of his generosity, and it shouldn't be allowed to obscure the extent to which he's an original. With his last three or four collections he has done for sex and death in poetry what Woody Allen has done for them in the cinema. The accent is different, of course, but the concentrated focus and the combination of hilarity and desperation is similar. Book by book his 'uneasy writing' gets uneasier: the more he longs for the simple life and the pleasures of being 'bedroomised', the less satisfying and available his aims become:

> For nursery days are gone, nightmare is
> real and there are no Good Fairies,
> The fox's teeth are in the bunny
> and nothing can remove them, honey.

Many poets' conscious and single-minded devotion to a particular theme inhibits their development. But since for Ewart sex has an everyday importance, it's a short step from considering its frustrations and rewards to involving himself with the ordinary in all its aspects. This is partly a matter of his deliberately inclusive approach to the world, but it's also manifested by the marvellous, prized inconsequentiality of thoughts which are thrown up by the requirements of form:

> There's a gnome in the garden,
> a young man gets a hard-on
> with a girl who is full of Romance.
> Life goes on, ordinary,
> milk comes up from the dairy
> and a batsman's correcting his stance.

It's not surprising to find Ewart professing modesty about his abilities. Not to do so might be to make himself vulnerable to the same charge of hubris that he occasionally levels against others. But his own judgment — 'They'll say (if I'm lucky):/he wrote some silly poems and some of them were funny' — is more than a method of defence. It's also a way of encountering the world. Because he keeps a low profile no one sees him watching and as a result he's able to write tenderly, as well as satirically, with a pronounced lack of self-consciousness.

Among this week's contributors:

ANDREW MOTION is the author of *The Pleasure-Steamers*. His book on Edward Thomas will be published by Routledge later this year.

SIMON NORTH has written a new adaptation of *Pericles* which was performed earlier in the year in Northampton.

DAVID BENEDICTUS's most recent novel, *A Twentieth-Century Man*, was published by Blond & Briggs.

NICHOLAS SHRIMPTON will be teaching English at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, from the autumn.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE is on holiday until 22 August. In the next four issues of the NS theatre will be reviewed by CHRISTOPHER EDWARDS.

Nicholas Shrimpton

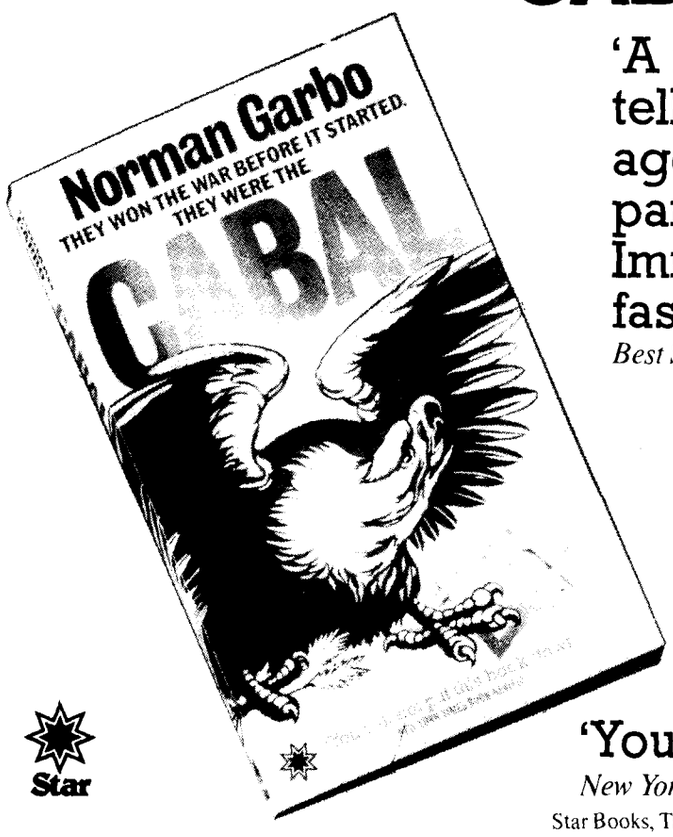
Ten Year Plans

The City Builder by GEORGE KONRAD *Sidgwick* £5.95
Runaway Horse by MARTIN WALSER *Secker* £5.50
Abracadabra! by WOLF MANKOWITZ *Macmillan* £5.95
One Hot Summer in Kyoto by JOHN HAYLOCK *London Magazine Editions* £5.95

The god that failed in the 1970s was the planner. Tower blocks and Ten Year Plans, revaluations and ring-roads crumbled, with equal facility, into gloom and squalor, and our faith in the bright-eyed bureaucrat crumbled with them. Contingency and human nature doggedly mocked the slide-rule. It is natural, but none the less surprising, to find the most distinctive fictional expression of this disillusionment emerging from Eastern Europe. George Konrád lives and writes in Hungary, a country more encumbered than most with plans and programmes. The surprise is that he is able to articulate his dismay with such comprehensive candour. 'Bogus schemes', 'stupid thoughts' and 'vapid visions' are the kindest words he can find for attempts to shape the future. And when his hero declares 'I was a city planner in the early phase of socialism', the tone is that in which one might announce oneself a teenage dope-fiend.

The literary method of *The City Builder* is

THEY WON THE WAR BEFORE IT STARTED
THEY WERE THE CABAL



'A fascinating thriller, CABAL tells the story of Jewish agents in the US and their part in the six-day war of '67. Immensely readable...tense, fast-moving action'
Best Sellers

CABAL NORMAN GARBO

THIS TIME THEY HAD A CHOICE:
STRIKE FIRST OR WITNESS
A NEW HOLOCAUST

'You will not put this book down'
New York Times Book Review

Star

Star Books, The Paperback Division of W. H. Allen, 44 Hill Street, London W1X 8LB.

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not, of course, entirely headlong. The audacious political aphorisms are cunningly dispersed within the dense verbal thickets of a novel of sensibility. The narrator explores his childhood, mourns his wife and dissects his current state of mind. At times the imagery has a fruity fullness which suggests a shortage of blue pencils in Budapest. 'It is still,' we are told in the opening chapter, 'the uncertain hour, when the shock troops of light invade the furrows of a ravaged face, and each passing second is tapped out on a brain teeming with slogans of a paltry past.' Ah yes, 5.38 a.m. But elsewhere the writing is sharp and direct. The city becomes, by turns, a symbol of the self, a model of Hungarian history, and a political paradigm, and it functions illuminatingly in all three capacities.

The ideas which Konrád puts forward as an alternative to the planned society are, it must be said, somewhat vague. In the sixth chapter his narrator insists that he is still a man of the left. But since he defines this stance merely as a 'thousand-year-old continuity of the spirit' which makes 'practical criticism of the existing culture', it doesn't amount to very much, and his conception of the good life which must be rescued from the deadly grasp of the sociological technocrat is confined to some rhapsodic, and thoroughly unspecific, clusters of imagery. For all this, *The City Builder* is an alert and intelligent book, with a topical urgency which belies the subjective languor of its style.

Martin Walser's *Runaway Horse* is a slimmer, neater and altogether more modest beast. Helmut and Sabina Halm, the central characters, leave Stuttgart every year for a placid holiday on the banks of Lake Constance. He is a schoolteacher who longs for peace and quiet. 'Martyred inertia' is his favourite mood, 'incognito' his most cherished image. To his horror, he is recognised in a lakeside cafe by a noisy childhood friend. The result is a dour social and psychological comedy.

Klaus Buch, the intruder, is in every way his old friend's opposite. Halm is more than half in love with easeful death. Buch, by contrast, newly married to a youthful second wife, clings to life with ostentatious determination. He jogs, swims, sails, eats health-foods, drinks mineral water and believes in up-front conversations about one's sex life. Not all his physical achievements are quite as impressive as they originally seem. His excitement at equalling the year's best time for the 2,000 metres, for example, is neatly punctured by the discovery that the track is 500 metres shorter than he thought. But he still has enough energy to cling to Halm like a latter-day Old Man of the Sea. He wants to shake his friend out of his dull routine. And he believes that, in return, Halm can provide him with an intellectual revivification.

Halm endures these attentions with his characteristic subdued desperation. Eventually, taken sailing during a dangerous storm, he kicks Buch overboard and believes that he has killed him. Then, after a further ironic twist of plot, the story turns back to its opening, in an enigmatic circularity which obliges us to reconsider everything we have read.

Such elegant concision is a world away from Wolf Mankowitz's *Abracadabra*, a rich and various stew of a book, stronger on juice than it is on judgment. In part this is an attempt at political satire. The hero, Benjamin Abarbanel, lies in an automated medical ward in the year 2013, a prisoner of 'the most benevolent and puissant welfare state'. The country is now ruled by the Inland Revenue computer and London has been renamed Wilsonium.

If you like comedy like that, that's the sort of comedy you like. Fortunately the novel has another, and less laboured, strand. Benjamin spends his time remembering his experiences as an evacuee during the second world war, and the tale of an East End boy billeted on a mad would-be alchemist has a good deal of zany charm. It's hard not to feel, however, that the book would be much better if it were a little less miscellaneous.

John Haylock's *One Hot Summer in Kyoto* shows very convincingly what a single-minded concentration can achieve. The plot is the slight story of an English university teacher in Japan, spending his summer vacation in an uncomfortably humid provincial city. His purpose is to escape both his bossy English wife and his submissive Japanese mistress. But once established in Kyoto he promptly becomes entangled with two further women. What sounds like a sexist fantasy is in fact a comic account of impotence and frustration, and the wry humour is attractively combined with a pungent evocation of life in the contemporary Far East.

Olga Semenova

Falling Foul

Prisoners of Conscience in the USSR: Their Treatment and Conditions *Amnesty International* £3.25
Soviet Psychoprisons by H. FIRESIDE *W. W. Norton* £6.95
Punitive Medicine by A. PODRABINEK *Karoma, Michigan* $12.95
Institute of Fools by V. NEKIPELOV *Gollancz* £7.95
History's Carnival by L. PLYUSHCH *Collins Harvill* £9.50

Prison-camp or psychiatric hospital. These are the two alternatives that face the Soviet dissident. There are about 10,000 dissidents in the prisons and camps, another thousand in psychiatric hosipitals of the special and ordinary type. For their political and religious beliefs they are incarcerated among thieves, murderers and lunatics.

Amnesty International's *Prisoners of Conscience* brings up to date their 1975 account of the treatment and conditions of dissenters in the different institutions of the Gulag. It remains by far the clearest and most comprehensive handbook on the subject and adds a great deal of important new evidence. Prisons are used for transit, for pre-trial detention for particularly dangerous or rebellious convicts and are generally even nastier than the camps. Yulia Voznesenskaya, a poet and feminist from Leningrad, describes the systematic tormenting of female prisoners by guards in a transit prison in Novosibirsk 1977. First they made the girls shower in water alternately boiling hot and cold, then they drove them naked down a corridor lined with male guards and prisoners. Later they had to run a gauntlet of guards who beat them with their fists, keys and a hose-pipe. Finally, 21 of them were crowded into a punishment cell meant for four people. They were allowed to crawl out as they lost consciousness, one by one.

In prisons and the camps, convicts are kept permanently hungry. The normal diet in Mordovia, for example, consists of miniscule portions of rotten fish, entrails and soup made from rotten cabbage. This is for men doing hard labour, often in appalling conditions. The law of the jungle rules in the camps. Prisoners, especially in transit, are beaten, raped and occasionally murdered by each other and by the guards. Medical treatment is almost impossible to obtain. For these reasons many prisoners, especially the common criminals, regard psychiatric hospitals as paradise and eagerly pretend to be mad in order to get transferred to one.

They soon regret it if they succeed. Two new general works, *Soviet Psychoprisons* by the American professor Harvey Fireside and *Punitive Medicine* by the Russian ambulance driver Alexander Podrabinek, describe the theory and practice of Soviet psychiatric terror. *Soviet Psychoprisons* is dry, muddled and patchy, in no way a substitute for the standard work on the subject, Bloch and Reddaway's *Russia's Political Hospitals*. It is valuable for its lengthy appendices summarising Soviet writings — by Plyushch, Podrabinek, Nekipelov, Gluzman and Bukovsky. *Punitive Medicine*, on the other hand, is simple, vivid and wide in scope, an astonishing achievement for a young man of 24. It was written under the most difficult circumstances. At one point the KGB confiscated Podrabinek's manuscript and he had to reconstruct it from memory. For writing it he was sentenced in 1978 to five years internal exile. He is now in Siberia.

The building of Special Psychiatric Hospitals (SPHs) was begun under Stalin by the secret police chiefs Yezhov and Beria. But in those days patients were very rarely given medication. Why bother? They could always use a bullet instead. The political use of psychiatry was developed into a sophisticated system only by Stalin's successors, as a direct result of detente. The number of SPHs rose from five in 1961 to 15 by 1975. Psychiatric internment is today a convenient way of dealing with the most formidable and obstinate dissidents, whom the regime doesn't want to bring to trial — those who are capable of creating a furore by their speeches; those who refuse to co-operate at their interrogation; and Marxist dissidents like Zhores Medvedev, General Grigorenko and Leonid Plyushch, who are able to outwit their judges using their own terminology. There are two routes by which dissidents arrive at psychiatric hospitals. They may be either arrested or just picked up on the streets on the basis of the *Instruction on the Urgent Hospitalisation of the Dangerously Mentally Ill.*

Most of them are then sent for a forensic psychiatric examination to the Serbsky Institute, whose notorious team of doctors — Lunts, Landau, Morozov, Taltse — have specialised in certifying the dissident insane. Victor Nekipelov's beautifully written book, *Institute of Fools*, is the first inside account of this institution. Nekipelov, poet and pharmacist, was arrested in 1973 and sent to the Serbsky Institute, where he was declared sane. He has now been sentenced to seven years' hard labour and five years' internal exile — the maximum sentence under Article 70 of the RFSFR code. He writes tenderly an

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humc ously about his fellow patients, the many riminals, the few insane and the borderl cases like Igor Rozovsky with his 'strange and beautiful mania for horses'. He brings the psychiatrists, ignorant and self-seeking, to life. The Serbsky's psychiatric examinations are pathetically inadequate. The doctors make their diagnoses on the orders of the KGB, in which many of them (including the recently deceased Lunts and Taltse) are high-ranking officers. As symptoms of mental illness they cite: 'reformist delusions', 'wears a beard', 'a persistent mania for truth seeking', 'is inclined to fruitless philosophising', 'considers the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia an act of aggression'.

Podrabinek explains how Soviet psychiatrists can make such diagnoses with some degree of sincerity and why these diagnoses are acceptable to the Soviet public. The ethics of the normal Soviet citizen are based on the concept of 'normality' or as oppositionists put it 'the rentier concept'. A normal person is 'a person of mediocre intellect and bourgeois tastes, civilised rather than cultured, who is unwilling to take chances'. He cares most in life about his painfully acquired position and material possessions and is happy to conform in the realm of ideology, whatever his secret opinions. To him, the actions of a man like Grigorenko, who chose to sacrifice his position as a general and his salary of 800 roubles a month, really do seem mad. Soviet psychiatrists have developed medical theories to accompany the rentier concept. Soviet psychiatry is behavioural. Freud is rejected, the idea of the unconscious regarded as based on 'idealistic, reactionary philosophical notions'.

Academician Snezhnevsky, the doyen of Soviet psychiatry, has broadened the definition of schizophrenia to encompass any deviation from the rentier norm. According to him, schizophrenia is a lifelong illness. It sometimes appears in a chronic form — with delirium, hallucinations etc; sometimes in a mild or 'sluggish' form — as 'reformist delusions', 'religious hallucinations', 'a mania for philosophising'; and sometimes is dormant and shows no symptoms at all. All these forms are equally manifestations of schizophrenia and the people exhibiting them are equally mad. Dr Lunts argued that the schizophrenics who have sluggish or non-existent symptoms are the most dangerous of all and the most urgently in need of hospitalisation. Dissidents certified for schizophrenia when expressing no symptoms include the poet Natalya Gorbanevskaya, sent to Kazan SPH on a diagnosis which said 'the possibility of a weak form of schizophrenia cannot be ruled out'.

Most dissidents are sent to Special Psychiatric Hospitals. These come under the administration of the police, not the Ministry of Health, and are often situated in former prisons. They are surrounded by high walls topped with electrified fences and have watchtowers manned by guards with machine guns. Dissidents are placed with violent murderers. The orderlies are criminals from the camps who delight in maltreating their charges. The doctors prescribe drugs as a means of punishment, not for medical reasons. The two outstanding accounts of conditions in SPHs are those of Leonid Plyushch and Mikhail Bukobaka. In *History's Carnival,* Plyushch, the bravest of all known victims of Soviet psychiatric terror, tells his story with modesty, wit and understatement. His account of the evolution of his views and his insights into the regime are particularly interesting because, while rejecting the Soviet system, he has remained a Marxist. Snezhnevsky certified him insane for his 'ideas of reformism that have turned into a mania of inventiveness in the field of psychology'. He describes his arrival in Dnipropetrovsk SPH where he was to spend over two years:

> The horror of the psikhushka began to grip me. The quarantine ward that I was taken to contained more patients than beds. I was assigned to be the third person on two bunks that had been pushed together. One inmate was writhing in convulsions, head twisted to the side and eyes bulging. Another patient was gasping for breath, and his tongue was lolling. A third was screaming for the nurse and begging for a corrective to alleviate the physical effect of haloperidol ... The next day was even more dispiriting. I awoke early to find two orderlies beating Oleg with all their might.

As Plyusch stubbornly refused to admit the error of his opinions he was administered drug after drug — haloperidol (without the essential anti-parkinsonian correctives), insulin, trifuloperazine. His body swelled up, he developed erisyphelis, had convulsions, found it difficult to see or speak, became totally apathetic and sleepy. Only the determination of his wife and a massive international campaign saved him from being turned into a vegetable.

Those who have spoken out against the compulsory hospitalisation of the sane include Gluzman, sentenced to seven years' imprisonment for refusing to agree that Grigorenko was mad, and Voloshanovich, who, with Podrabinek and others, founded the *Working Commission to Investigate the Use of Psychiatry for Political Purposes* in 1977. Voloshanovich, who now lives in London, examined 41 people sent for compulsory treatment in psychiatric hospitals and 'found not a single case of definite mental illness'. Among the 41 were the cases of Klebanov and three other members of the Free Trade Union. More than 40 of the Free Trade Union's members are known to have been incarcerated in psychiatric hospitals. Their cases throw light on a little known aspect of psychiatric abuse in the USSR. To the thousand or so dissident intellectuals in psychiatric hospitals should be added a many times greater number of ordinary Soviet workers, who are not opponents of the Soviet regime, but who have been unlucky, fallen foul of the authorities in one way or another. They are certified insane for complaining about abuses — unfair dismissal, non-observance of safety regulations, incorrect wage-payments, the pilfering and corruption of bureaucratic employees. The only way to obtain redress for such grievances in the USSR is to take personal complaints to higher government organs. About 12 people a day are picked up from the queues of petitioners in the waiting room of the Supreme Soviet alone. They can't be imprisoned because they've committed no conceivable crime, so they are diagnosed as suffering from 'a mania for litigation' and sent to psychiatric hospitals. The number of sane people labelled as mentally ill is rapidly increasing in the Soviet Union. This is bound to happen as discontent of every kind grows stronger. At the moment the Soviet psychiatric hospitals are full to bursting after the pre-Olympic round-up. Some of their inmates will be let out afterwards, others won't.

Simon North

Repeat

The repetitions! ah the repetitions!
spring unfurled saplings, and old bones
returned
the untenable moods of worship
are carried off by the river, sliver
of delicate blood — idols
float on the water
babies curl in the first muscle of life
feel
the ache of four seasons!
History does not move
outside the first circle.

the failed lover
drowns
in his own errors
like an addict

Pillars of glass! New roads! New roads!
In our city they are still building
they are still feeding at the troughs.
Train loads of them get daily shunted
back and forth unmindful of the humiliation
or the weak reprimands of earlier belief.
It is an old notion, few complain
(the sloughs of ill omen
do not rouse them) — man
will always adapt to the strictures
of his own infirmity.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Sex, Society & Sadism

DAVID BENEDICTUS criticises the Williams Committee report on obscenity and film censorship.

'He that toucheth pitch shall be defiled therewith', warns the author of *Ecclesiasticus*. Bernard Williams's Committee not only touched pitch, it dabbled in it up to its arm-pits; yet it emerged not only undefiled, but innocent. The Committee included a judge, a psychiatrist, a professor, a social worker, a journalist and a priest — about as representative as such committees usually are, bearing in mind that — so far as we know — there were neither producers nor consumers of porn serving on it.

Innocence is not innocence without temptation. The Committee met 35 times, viewed 110 rude films or bits of films, pored over innumerable obscene publications, heard the evidence of 150 organisations and 1,400 individuals — even inviting contributions from the women's movement, when it was felt that they had not put their case — and remained capable of being shocked.

Pasolini's *Salò* shocked them. ('All of us agreed that it is obscene, in the sense that it is ruthlessly and almost unwatchably repellent.') And the notion that there are those who enjoy scenes of sexual violence, and others prepared to present such things as entertainment, shocked them. But they were sophisticated enough to realise that a society deprived of such outlets will create its own, and cited the case of a man in prison who constructed pornographic pictures out of *The Farmer's Weekly*. Indeed the general tenor of the report is so enlightened, and the style in which it is set down so urbane, that it seems churlish to point out the inadequacies and illogicalities of their recommendations, and to argue that they have missed a boat that was really well worth catching.

In order to clarify my suspicions that the Committee, having bent over backwards to be fair, has fallen rather heavily on its head, I spent a day at a seminar organised by the British Film Institute. I came away wiser thanks principally to brilliant papers by Paul O'Higgins and John Ellis. The Williams Committee report argues bravely and consistently that it can find no evidence linking pornography to sexual crimes. Indeed it goes so far as to suggest that pornography may actually lower the incidence of sexual assaults on female children. It has charts and statistics to back up these assertions. But it recoiled at some of the violence presented before it. 'We were totally unprepared for the sadistic material . . . we found it extremely disturbing that highly explicit depictions of mutilation, savagery, menace and humiliation . . .' and so on. Very well. The Committee's sensitivity does it credit. But why not therefore take the brave, logical and — in Britain — revolutionary step of once and for all distinguishing between sexual matters, when violence is not invoked, and sadism.

West Germany, while prohibiting displays of bestiality, which Williams surprisingly finds harmless enough because they are 'of appeal and interest only to those with a pre-existing disposition towards it', has a general edict against 'the dissemination of material which depicts acts of violence against people in cruel or inhuman ways, thereby glorifying such acts or making them appear harmless, or which incites to racial hatred'. Good for West Germany. But Williams, besides banning from public exhibition those films which contain material 'prohibited by law' — and the interpretation of what materials were prohibited by law would have to be made by laymen not lawmen — would ban those films which — deep breath — 'having regard to the importance of allowing the development of artistic expression and of not suppressing truth or reality are nevertheless unacceptable because of the manner in which they depict violent or sexual activity or crime'.

And that really is a case of going round in ever-decreasing circles until you disappear up your own terms of reference. Clear-headed when he deals with the printed word, which he would have free of restrictions, Williams is vague and convoluted here. A case could be made for banning films which glorify drug abuse (Australia), which entice to crime (Sweden), or which brutalise the audience by lowering the ability to feel pity for another (Denmark under 12); or which show you how to make a bomb, hot-wire a car, or encourage racial hatred. Williams considers such matters would be covered under existing laws, or one presumes he does. He never says so.

In any case the logic of the Committee's special treatment of the cinema is about as logical as a bowl of soup. It argues that the cinema with all its tricks — 'Death by a thousand cuts', Hitchcock called it in a memorable phrase — presents an image so realistic that it can be mistaken for reality. But surely this underestimates the sophistication of the present-day minority cinema audience, which is unlikely to queue up to see *The Texas Chain-Saw Massacre* and then complain that it was shocked by the violence. At the BFI Seminar there were those who argued that the very act of shooting and editing a film is per se sadistic, for it involves the dismembering of the human body.

One could argue that 'live shows' are closer to reality than film shows and should therefore be subject to stricter controls. They are happening when they appear to be happening. But Williams remains cool under the collar about live shows. 'Live entertainment . . . affects few people . . . (it) is predominantly an adult interest . . . there is less to be concerned about . . . people have to make a conscious decision to go to see it . . . we received few complaints' and so on. Effectively Williams's blood pressure rises only when a live show 'involves actual sex'. This 'immediately introduces a presumption that the motives no longer have any artistic pretension'. Oh? Williams suggests the prohibition of stage performances including 'masturbation and forms of genital, anal or oral connection between humans and animals as well as between humans' — only *don't* connect! — or 'the sexual exploitation of any person under the age of sixteen'. One wonders why such unexceptional proposals could not have done for the cinema.

Six new certificates are proposed to replace the four existing ones. The new 'restricted' certificate, 18R, would be applicable to films which deal with 'violence, cruelty, or horror, or sexual, faecal or urinary functions, or genital organs' in a manner which the Board of Examiners consider 'inappropriate' for open exhibition. The new IIA certificate would make some films available to children under the age of eleven only if those children were accompanied by responsible adults. The disastrous results of ten-year-olds hanging about cinemas asking adults (and how, incidentally, are cinema staff expected to tell responsible adults from irresponsible ones upon casual acquaintance?) to take them into the films, are painful to contemplate. If this is protecting children from 'sexual exploitation' we'd better expose them!

As for the 16 and 18 categories it would have been helpful had the Committee instructed cinema managers, who would be responsible in law, how to tell a 16-year-old from an 18-year-old. I can't. The proposed new categories are less satisfactory, in short, than the old ones. If certification is desirable I should have thought that 'U' for unrestricted viewing, 'A' for over-14s and 'X' for over-18s with a new restricted category, if required, would make good sense.

It seems that a Committee which sets out with the worthy intention of ensuring that 'restrictions need to be justified by the evidenced of harm', ends up arguing for more and more restrictions (except in the area of the printed word) with less and less evidence of harm.

I have no space to draw attention to the other nonsenses which have been allowed to disfigure an elegant report, except briefly to add that it makes no allowance for the latest developments in video-cassettes, video-discs, cablevision and associated gadgetry. By the time the Williams Committee recommendations become law (which they probably won't, despite £100,000 spent on preparing the report) private viewing of films and video will have largely replaced mass entertainment Williams's innocence is technological too.

My own view is that it is an irrelevance to stress sexual matters so earnestly when the real threat to our society comes in more sinister shapes. Sexual imagery may be a useful metaphor for political disaffection (vide de Sade, Orton and others) but one cannot censor graffiti, nor insist on cuts in a race-riot. Nor is it kind to try to stop people indulging the

Michael Hofmann

By Forced Marches

Who knows what would happen if you
stopped?
The autobiography draws out, lengthens
towards the end. Life stays in one place,
often Rome; and to compensate, you cut up
your time in many pieces. Rations are halved,
then quartered. The emergency is acute.
Now it is one lump of sugar per day.

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obsessions, which may turn nasty if repressed. One's duty should be only to restrict those whose obsessions require the unwilling participation of others. And hope more positively that by encouraging what is worthwhile — currently a censorship certificate costs as much for a short experimental film as it does for a Hollywood multimillion blockbuster — one may help people to recognise the shoddy.

Rock

Mark Kidel

'I'm Alive'

We certainly have strange ways of entertaining ourselves on the slippery slide down towards the holocaust: the rock world reflects a spectrum that runs from the cold and clinical expression of despair or vitriolic fury to sweet celebrations of the divine qualities within us all and the promise of a New Age — a deranged kaleidoscope of visions that mirrors the confusion of our times.

The curious combination of darkness and show-business is nowhere more apparent than in Peter Gabriel's highly successful third solo album (*Peter Gabriel* Charisma CDS 4019). Gabriel is an explorer of the collective unconscious ('Bring out the devil to bring out the god,' he calls in one song), taking on, in succession, a series of archetypal mantles from under which he expresses the murkier side of 'civilised' humanity. The 'intruder' of the first track on the album gets his kicks out of just about every conceivable form of penetration, from psychic search-and-destroy to sex and phone tapping, a micro-chip era equivalent of the urban blues's 'Backdoor Man'. In another song ('Family Snapshot') Gabriel suggests the myths and motives that may have driven Lee Oswald to kill Kennedy — the first public murder designed for mass consumption: 'All you people in TV land/I will wake up your skulls/Peak time viewing blown in a flash/as I burn into your memory cells/'cos I'm alive.' In a vision which emerges gradually from a pattern of fragments scattered through the material, Gabriel describes a world of illusion, deception and insecurity, a universe in which wholeness and relationship have been replaced by alienation and isolation. The musical presentation of this dislocated universe is a little over-dramatic at times, for Gabriel has always been attracted to the *grand guignol* aspects of opera, but it is unquestionably exciting and frequently very inventive, combining fashionable synthesised sounds with the more familiar guitars, bass and drums of the Sixties and Seventies. The complex mesh of sounds is delicately poised between ugly distortion and delicate beauty, and the richness of the musical textures is almost excessive — the excess a reflection perhaps of the way in which Gabriel's art so inescapably slides into mere entertainment.

Something of the same dichotomy colours Bob Dylan's new album *Saved* (CBS 86113), the second since his conversion to Bible-study and Christianity. The combination of spirituality and entertainment is a particularly American phenomenon, and what we may all find so difficult to accept in this country is that the album is so very good in musical terms, certainly as good as anything that Dylan has done in the past. Religion has clearly not watered down any of his formidable power, and while the lyrics on the new album may be as straightforward and undemanding as the mundane love lyrics of *Nashville Skyline*, this is a record which communicates powerful emotions in an unusually honest fashion. We may flinch at the sincerity of Dylan's new-found love, and at his intimate dialogue with Christ, but the spirit of the music is no different from what it has always been — a sense that 'the times they are a changin'' and that the answer is blowing in the wind. He has always been a millennarian; it is only the language and context that have changed, a shift like so many others in his long career. He is very ably supported by a group of top musicians, notably Tim Drummond on bass, Jim Keltner on drums and a trio of soulful ladies who provide punchy gospel backing vocals. That the considerable *feeling* expressed on *Saved* never slips into sentimentality is due to Dylan's integrity and genius.

Dylan has never stopped moving, and it is change which prevents rock poets and musicians from getting stale or slipping too far into the snares of entertainment — the need to serve a market that allows few risks and little creativity. The Rolling Stones have lost *their* nerve. *Emotional Rescue* (Rolling Stones Records CUN 39111) oozes a sense of stagnation and boredom, the prototype rock villains' pose of debauchery now mummified for posterity in a package of formula sounds and styles that are a sad echo of their past magnificence. The vibrant amalgam of sex, mystery, machismo and romance that made the Stones so popular has wilted. The trouble with the Stones and other rock stars is that age is not carried with grace: commercial success, the prime criterion of the entertainment industry, is a function of youth, and its pursuit prevents musicians like the Stones from growing older with confidence and style, like bluesmen Muddy Waters and B.B. King, for instance.

Going over the same ground is one of the risks of the rock game: the demands of the market and the built-in stylistic obsolescence, which is as much a function of consumer boredom as it is of the record company's shareholders' greed, put pressure on bands and solo artists to produce a new album every 18 months. Graham Parker's latest album (*Up the Escalator* Stiff Seez 24) has been very well received, and taken on its own it is undoubtedly very good, but it shows no advance on his excellent previous work, and provides little more than a replacement for well-worn copies of earlier albums or something fresh for bored ears. Much the same could be said for Joan Armatrading's *Me Myself I* (A&M AMLH 64809); she too sounds like the victim of over-recording, her own clear talents unable to keep up with the growing acclaim for her work. There are some very good moments on this album — a familiar collection of introspective songs about love, lost and found, but her new confidence has robbed Joan Armatrading of the creative tension and energy that comes from walking a knife-edge.

Howard Devoto, lead-singer of Magazine, is still far enough away from success to be treading a tight-rope, and *The Correct Use of Soap* (Virgin V 2156) is full of the bittersweet atmosphere of doom that has characterised the group's very individual style in the past. It is an investigation of dread and nightmare which shows variety and invention. 'I've been swimming in poison,' Devoto sings, as he describes allusively the no-man's-land between people, the spaces created by fear and insecurity. It is a more personal terror than Gabriel's, raw contact with a maze of uncomfortable emotions. There is no pretence at entertainment here though, with music as lugubrious as any of the lyrics: still a curious mood, considering that this sort of music gets played in dance-halls and places of supposed celebration. There is even less compromise in Pink Military's first album, *Do Animals Believe in God?* (Eric's Records 004), a thoroughly dour and mostly glacial excursion into the multifaceted insanity of our age — as seen by a group of kids from Liverpool. This is rock'n'roll for silicon-chip days, the joyless search for a lost spirit in the depths of the waste land — a 'jungle' in which 'degenerated man' has lost any feeling. This is the hellish counterpart to Dylan's world of salvation, both different responses to the same reality, and linked by the medium of the rock album.

Any Trouble, Stiff Records' latest discovery, play as if none of this mattered at all: lead-singer Clive Gregson writes hit materials, songs with titles like 'The Hurt', 'Nice Girls', 'Romance' and 'Foolish Pride'. Something suggests the innocence of teenage romance magazines, but, as with the early work of Gregson's mentor Elvis Costello, it is naiveté laced with a clever sense of irony and a formidable bank of musical back references. Pure pop for now people, as Nick Lowe might call it, an oasis of make-believe that provides a temporary escape from the gathering storm.

Music

Andrew Clements

Street Walker

Gustav Mahler: The Early Years by DONALD MITCHELL *Faber* £12.95
Recollections of Gustav Mahler by NATALIE BAUER-LECHNER *Faber* £8.95
Gustav Mahler: An Introduction to his Music by DERYCK COOKE *Faber* £4.95 & £2.50
Mahler's Sixth Symphony — A Study by NORMAN DEL MAR *Eulenburg Books* £7.75

The battle now is long won; even in Britain Mahler is accepted as one of the giants of 19th-century symphonism. That the battle should have been delayed until the 1960s to be fought is to the perpetual shame of our musical life. That it was fought at all is largely to the credit of three of the authors listed here. Donald Mitchell's study — the first volume of what is promised as a four-part work — was originally published in 1958. The second part (*The Wunderhorn Years*) appeared in 1975, and this revision by Paul Banks and David Matthews brings its predecessor into line with more recent researches. The result is an unsatisfactory hybrid for anyone who prefers an elegantly proportioned biography. The original text has not been reset, but marginal arrows indicate a later gloss; when the notes of the 1958 edition themselves have qualifying additions the whole structure of the book threatens to topple into incoherence.

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If it remains an infuriating book to read without an army of bookmarks, *The Early Years* is nevertheless the most complete and accessible life in English of the young Mahler. It covers the first 20 years, from 1860 until his first professional engagement as a conductor; thereafter he would live out the paradox of fame as an increasingly successful conductor, appointed director of the Vienna State Opera at 37, and of obscurity as a part-time composer, able to write music only in the summer months when the Opera was closed. Childhood still remains the most thinly documented period of Mahler's life, partly because of an absence of primary sources, but also because of his reticence in later life to discuss the many traumas of that period. Mitchell must therefore rely partly on Alma Mahler's book of reminiscences, highly coloured and romanticised, and on Natalie Bauer-Lechner's memories, published in German in 1923 and only now translated by Dika Newlin. Natalie Bauer-Lechner knew Mahler from his conservatory days until 1902, when he met and married Alma, and she married Arnold Rosé, leader of the Vienna Philharmonic. The 'unlicked bear-cub' of her first impressions has become the composer of the fourth symphony at the close of her journal; the tone of the writing is pleasantly objective, and the observations are wide ranging. Mahler's views on music and interpretation seem to have been taken down verbatim, while personal details of appearance and habits give immediacy. There are no revelations: the original German edition has been plundered too thoroughly by biographers for that.

If by now the bare facts of Mahler's life are well established, the symphonies themselves still need scrupulous commentators to rescue them from the attacks of the uncommitted, and from the enthusiasm of uncritical supporters. Deryck Cooke began the task with the beginnings of the Mahler revival, but his death in 1976 prevented him from writing a definitive study, as it also prevented a completion of his book on Wagner's *Ring*. Cooke's background in 19th-century romanticism remains the most appropriate starting point; extrapolating Mahler's achievement backwards from its modernist leanings fails to appreciate its roots in literature and the widest range of German music. What is now issued as an introduction to Mahler's music is a compilation by Colin and David Matthews from a variety of sources, with its beginning in an essay Cooke wrote for the BBC's celebration of Mahler's centenary in 1960. Short essays on each of the symphonies and the song-cycles follow, skilfully assembled, and translations of all the song texts are provided.

The whole is not the detailed analytical work that Cooke could have written so well, but within its non-technical scope he manages many brilliant insights. Aaron Copland once defined the difference between Beethoven and Mahler as 'the difference between watching a great man walking down the street and watching a great actor play the part of a great man walking down the street'. Cooke corrects him:

> The real difference between Beethoven and [Mahler] is that between watching a great man walk down a street in which he feels himself secure, and is therefore perfectly at ease with his greatness, and watching a great man walk down a street in which he feels himself totally insecure, and is therefore obliged to act out his greatness, self-consciously and defiantly — because he is scarcely able to credit it in his heart of hearts, uncertain whether the street will not suddenly cease to be a reassuring background and become hostile territory in which he will be an outcast.

The detailed and devoted treatment which the music itself now demands is exemplified by Norman Del Mar's painstaking study. He begins with a thorough analysis of the sixth, managing to make even the complex structure of the finale apparently straightforward, but the bulk of the book is taken up with textual problems. He makes a watertight case for the restoration of the third hammer blow to the finale (only superstitious fear made Mahler delete it) and an almost equally convincing one for the scherzo to follow the slow movement, and not to place it after the opening movement, as most contemporary conductors choose to do. It is inevitably a book that will appeal only to the most committed Mahlerians, but it sets a standard which could profitably be applied to all of the other nine symphonies.

Films

John Coleman

Square Times

Fame (AA) *Empire*
Jane Austen in Manhattan (A) *Everyman*
Bronco Billy (A) *Warner West End; ABC, Shaftesbury Avenue; general release*

A decibel's throw from Times Square stands a seedy, celebrated public institution for showbiz aspirants, the New York High School of Performing Arts. One of our younger migrant directors, Alan Parker (who became laudable with *Bugsy Malone* and bankable with *Midnight Express*), has decided — in his first all-American venture — to channel his talent and energy into a big, formula-fed, cliché-crammed, singing, dancing and emoting cavort on those premises. After a scrutiny of Christopher Gore's script about a class doing their four-year stint at the NYH of PA, the Board of Education refused entry to Parker's crew, so he fitted out a replica and managed to recruit many of the inmates — students and even staff — to do their tailored own things. The result is bludgeoning entertainment, another of those ovations to youth that veer wildly between the foot-tapping and the toe-curling, a sort of Rooney-and-Garland 'Hey, gang . . .', updated with four-letter words and ghetto marginalia. *Fame* is the spur to some authentic exhilaration, hyped up by distracting Dolby sound (one wonders why the El that train is rattling out overhead when the image is so irrevocably several rows in front of one); it is also sadly glib in its determination not to miss a contemporary trick. Musically, of course, it wears its heart on a record sleeve, disco-bound, all part of the package. But, with some fine performers excellently directed, it seems more than a pity that today's tokenism should reduce the characters they are asked to play to soap-opera carvings: a troubled gay with a famous, absent mother; an Irish-Jewish girl with a very present momma; a proud, illiterate black trouble-maker with *rhythm*; a poor little rich ballet-dancer who aborts their makings; a Puerto Rican lad with a raging comic gift and an improbable cause for honing it; and so on and on.

The trick with a fast-cut, kaleidoscopic, fairly knowing amusement of this order is to lean back and enjoy — and Mr Parker is astute enough to make one feel a bit pedantic in ruffling his high, busy surface, asking for something underneath. He has only himself to blame, though. Those planted 'problems' go about their own business of disturbing the wisecracking top dressing. 'I'm about as flamboyant as a beigel,' mourns mom-ridden Doris (excellent Maureen Teefy); Bruno (Lee Curreri) has a roomful of electronic gear and has composed a 'Requiem for Buck Rogers'; that would-be stand-up comedian, Ralph (Barry Miller) has some really raw, funny patter. The skimming dialogue ('He's not into vanilla,' a black chick advises a white one, too late, about the rhythmic Leroy, splendidly done by Gene Anthony Ray) is delivered with panache by everyone; a few other creditworthy names would be Irene Cara, Paul McCrane and Antonia Franceschi. Maybe a little more manner and rather less matter — admittedly an unusual request — would have suited better.

A fragment of an acting class in *Fame* has the instructor urging his recumbent pupils to Know the Floor. In the extremely peculiar *Jane Austen in Manhattan*, now on a large screen after its TV premiere on *The South Bank Show* a few weeks back, Robert Powell is on display, playing a deeply phoney little-theatre guru, Pierre, likewise putting his hypnotised troupe through Method antics. His sadistic, self-serving charmer is at loggerheads with Anne Baxter's Lilianna, a 'proper' ex-actress who was his mentor, lover and drama coach for a while. Their quarrel is over who shall stage a version of a recently bought-at-auction MS, a 40-page play drawn from Samuel Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison* by the 12-year-old Miss Austen. Ripe material here, one would have sworn, for the combined gifts of James Ivory and Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, not forgetting the producing member of a stunning, subtle trio, Ismail Merchant. The hothouse worlds of off-Broadway and on are surely there for the probing. What we get is more like outright defoliation; or — to switch the metaphor — too many ironies in the fire.

The piece has moments and appearances of both formidable edge and tremulous delicacy. The lived-in, sprawling studio workshop of Pierre's experiments feels awfully right and likely, and the anguished Ariadne (Sean Young) who leaves her rising star husband for Powell's Svengali is beautiful in that interesting way that can also become plain at the drop of a bad word. Anne Baxter dominates, in Arkadina flashbacks and a harsh little scene with her real-life daughter Katrina Hodiak What goes wrong is the basic crudity of the rival productions of 'Sir Charles', the near-*Hellzapoppin* or Alice-in-Blunderland travesty versus a kind of Mozartian chamber-opera And, even if it could be argued that such stuf is no exaggeration of genuine Manhattar follies, nothing can quite excuse th caricatural band of silly, wealthy theatrica angels — an *embarras de richesses* with vengeance. I very much hope I have misrea this event.

Clint Eastwood's *Bronco Billy*, in which th teak-faced superstar also plays the title role sets off regalingly with Billy's shoe-strin Wild West Show playing largely to a spatter ing of kids, or 'liddle pardners', as B.B. ac

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dresses them. A mean heiress (Sondra Locke) imports a Thirties or early Forties persona, as she is willynilly forced to join the travelling circus, into a script by Dennis Hackin that elsewhere bristles with a gentling nostalgia. The message is spelt out by a squaw (who is, naturally, no squaw): 'You can be anything you want — all you have to do is go out and become it.' For all its laconic interludes of neat fun, the film drags on to syll-a-bise its increasingly ambiguous moral. This could just be my week for not getting it.

Television

Julian Barnes

Goose-Stepping

When the early results came through on Day One of the *Olympics,* we learned that Russia had won a gold medal in the free pistol shooting. Well, they would, wouldn't they, my viewing companions sneered back at the set in unison. As these morally tatty Games proceed, it's going to become harder and harder to avoid lapsing into a state of self-pitying international paranoia. Take the case of Danny Nightingale, our gold-medal hope in the modern pentathlon. He randomly selects a Russian horse for the show jumping leg, and rides it more or less impeccably round the ring, except that the daft commie nag chooses to drop its rear hooves into precisely as many fences as there are onion domes on St Basil's. Explanation? Quite obviously, a subcutaneous KGB electrode implanted in the haunches of every horse, and a belted figure high up in the stands 'whispering' into his sleeve.

'Moscow 80 = Berlin 36' declared a chalk slogan near my home for the length of half a shower. Not really; but you'd think, wouldn't you, that the Russians would be keen to avoid providing for worldwide transmission too many images which evoked those earlier propaganda Games? At the opening ceremony, the Olympic flag was trooped by 'eight unknown sportsmen' (i.e. eight really not very good sportsmen) in pale blue lightweight suits and white gloves; they goose-stepped round the stadium to Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, legs sabre-dancing out and free arms flung vigorously across opposite shoulders. (Of course, the goose-step is commonplace in Eastern Europe, and doesn't have fascist connections over there; but even so, it's nothing if not martial, and looks very odd on a sportsman, however unknown.)

This queasy image had no sooner appeared than it was amplified. Behind the eight Daks stormtroopers came 22 additional high-kickers, though looking a little more Austin Reed in their blue blazers and white slacks. White gloves again — though this time they were more than decorative, designed to protect the strutters' hands against 'accidents' from the rear ends of the white doves they carried aloft on their straightened right arms. A dove of peace on the end of a Nazi salute: was it the year's strangest image?

Lord Killanin made a tactful speech, and the only children left in Moscow duly bombarded him with gladioli as if he were Barry Humphries. Brezhnev, speaking from a panelled bus shelter, was allowed (by Olympic tradition) only one sentence in which to open the Games; but who can monitor Russian punctuation — and the result was something so long it might have been scripted by Bernard Levin. The British athletes stayed away, and the team's *chef de mission* paraded with an Olympic flag, which the Soviet TV producer craftily excised from the picture. As a result, the Russian viewer was free to conclude that the British had become so enfeebled and ricket-stricken a race after a year of Mrs Thatcher that all they could raise for the Games was a single middle-aged pole-vaulter.

One wondered what the average Muscovite in the stadium made of it: or rather, the average, sanitised, with-dissidence-removed Muscovite. Most of them, of course, couldn't see much anyway because they had to keep on holding up coloured cards to construct a kaleidoscope of insincere slogans ('O Sport Thou Art Peace', etc). Why is this form of stadium entertainment so popular behind the Iron Curtain and so antipathetic to us? Is it perhaps because it seems to us to emphasise the antishness of the participants; whereas it seems to them to prove that expressions of the popular will can be both located and pungently conveyed? But what must it feel like to be a chap with a placard, turning it over by command, never seeing the result of your endeavours, and constantly blocking out the sun? It must be a bit like singing in the chorus of the *Messiah* while wearing earplugs. Perhaps one of the card-bearers who made Jimmy Hill's face for the opening credits of *Match of the Day* will write and elucidate.

The Olympics began — doubtless not intentionally — just as Gay Pride Week was ending. BBC-2 acknowledged the occasion with an *Inside Story* on *Coming Out*: a useful programme at a time when there seems to be a certain mild backlash against gays. Not just among Leviticans like Sir John Junor either: a lot of heterosexuals who supported gay lib as a principle now seem less pleased with it in practice. To some, gay couples are acceptable as long as they keep house plants and do French knitting in the long winter evenings; but if they jump about on the streets, dress in leather, and (my God) *look* gay, then they're held to be overstepping the mark. *We* didn't intend for you to behave like *that* when we legalised you, is the patronising implication. What 'that' may involve was occasionally made explicit in this programme: 'You then have to get across,' murmured a Hammersmith press officer, softly, 'that you enjoy sodomy ... it's very pleasant, very o.k.' One felt the soft shuffle of tightening sphincters all across the country; but it was bravely said. At the moment, homosexuality is legal rather as prostitution is legal, and scarcely more socially acceptable; so, as *Inside Story* made clear, all the old reality of being homosexual — of guilty suicides, shamed and bitter parents, arbitrary job dismissals — continues unabated. Gay pride is only partly about being proud to be gay; it's also about relief at surviving as such.

Russell Harty's new chat show, *Sorl Baht Booooks* (as the title song has it), will soon presumably be retitled *Sorl Baht Sex* (BBC-1). Last week the Lip discussed boffing with the parents of Louise 'Test Tube' Brown and with a benign Christopher Isherwood. As a relief between these two serious bits, Robert Morley was paid to plug his son Sheridan's new anthology. Memo to Russell: I've just written a book, and my dad's free any time.

Art

John Spurling

Fit and Well

British Art 1940-80 *Hayward*
Summer Show *Royal Academy*

British Art Shows seem to crop up with monotonous regularity, as if we constantly felt the need to check our weight and measure our girth. This latest is oddly dated, claiming to be British Art 1940-80, but actually including pre-war work by Nicholson, Piper, Wyndham Lewis, Matthew Smith, Bomberg and others and even a few pre-1941 paintings by Sickert, Gilman and Gaudier-Brzeska. Indeed the whole title must be a mistake (probably surviving from some early stage in the planning) since it suggests a representative view of the period, which the show is certainly not, lacking any major work by Moore, Hepworth, Nicholson or Caro, giving only the most patchy accounts of the Cornish School, of Abstraction and of developments in the last decade, and leaving out many interesting artists altogether. It is especially weak on sculpture: no Kneale, no Draper, no Frink, no Pye, no Sandle, no Sanderson. Nevertheless, if one ignores the title and takes the show as what it is, a kind of lucky dip into the Arts Council's now formidable collection, there is much to be said for it.

Dan Kavanagh's

'One of the most colourful and entertaining English thrillers to have come my way in a long time. Mr Kavanagh (who is really Julian Barnes in disguise, however the facetious jacket may try to persuade you otherwise) appears to have researched his subject with some relish, and his racy style keeps the whole thing moving at a lively trot.' *Evening Standard*

'A skilful and lively piece of writing, and the Soho background is amusingly and well handled.' *TLS*

'Exciting, funny and refreshingly nasty.' Martin Amis

JONATHAN CAPE/£4.95

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In the first place it is most sensitively hung, so that there is none of that awful sense of claustrophobic struggle which makes so many mixed shows look like experiments in the survival of the fittest. Even when you would expect a fight to the death between two enormous *machismo* canvases by John Walker and John Hoyland hung on adjoining walls, the duel is, as it were, allowed for, the space cleared, the combatants given time to remove their coats and get their breath, the whole affair turned into a properly controlled spectacle. The result is an honourable draw. Walker's rough, knifish shapes of yellow and green on deep blue are the more aggressive, but Hoyland's hot shield of red-over-yellow impasto holds Walker to his corner.

In the second place the collection from which the show is drawn is, on the evidence of the recently published catalogue (Arts Council, £10), the finest anywhere and a standing reproach to the Tate's contemporary collection. The Arts Council not only owns work by many good artists more or less cold-shouldered by the Tate, it has also in many cases secured better examples of the work of artists favoured by the Tate. The many hands responsible for this collection — artists, critics, members of the Art Advisory Panel and of the Council's own art department — have clearly done their stuff with the same sort of pleasure as if they had been buying for themselves. It is a collection to make one revise one's adverse opinions. I hereby revise mine of Craigie Aitchison, on the strength of his gently humorous *Crucifixion*, with its glowing flights of angels speeding to the rescue.

In the third place, even though one sometimes wishes the selectors had made a different lucky dip and not picked, for instance, dross by Uglow, Auerbach, Kossoff, Paolozzi, Buckley, Milow, when so many treasures escaped them, there's quite enough variety not to have to linger where one isn't wanted. You can turn from Uglow to Michael Andrews or an outstanding Jeffery Camp, from Paolozzi to Clough or Henry Mundy, from an almost lethal combination of Auerbach, Kossoff and Bratby (the only oppressive bit of hanging in the show) to an early, kitchen-sink Jack Smith.

In the fourth place there are the treasures they did put their hands on: two small but stunning Nicholsons; a recent Riley (five colours running like wind in a field); a dark-green Huxley over which float squares of reverberating blue, red, yellow and purple; a quiet blue Caro; a fiery Cornish Bomberg; a Bacon Pope; Paul Joyce's deep dark photographs of Wales; a delightful cockerel-like assemblage of brightly-coloured chunks of wood by Ken Turnell; a powerful Sutherland *Standing Form*. No doubt many absent treasures are on show somewhere else, since this is, in the words of the catalogue's forword, 'certainly the most actively "used" and circulated of all the national collections'.

In sum, then, it is a show which demonstrates nothing so dreary or contentious as the history of British Art over the last 40 years, but the sheer quality and individuality of a very small part of what has been produced. To visit the RA Summer Show — undiscriminating, over-stuffed, hung like a butcher's shop — is to be left feeling that it would really be better if all artists were forcibly restrained for several decades. To visit the Hayward is to have one's faith in the old trade restored.

Weekend Competition

No 2627 **Set by E.O. Parrott**

Scenes, please, from Dickensian novels revealing some of the horrors of Thatcher's Britain. Up to 150 words by 8 August.

No 2624 **Set by P.W.R. Foot**

A present-day publisher's letter of rejection for Gibbon, Milton, Thackeray, Bunyan, Eliot.

Report **By Toby Jugge**

The entries came pouring in — easy-peasy, you thought, just say something like 'Have you read Pam Ayres?' or 'No good for film rights'. Well yes, but a *bit* obvious. There was also a common tendency to be patently facetious and knowingly jokey, and only a few of you managed to keep a straight face for long enough to go on to the winner's podium. Eight green ones to each victor.

Dear Mr Milton,

In returning your poem, I cannot but deplore your endorsement of its climactic incident, the wanton eviction of an indigent young couple from their garden-city dwelling. Not just wanton, but illegal too, for Mr Adam's and Ms Eve's tenancy is patently a fully Protected one under the provisions of the 1968 Rent Act. The reason given for eviction — illicit mastication of fruit — is laughably thin, for the said comestibles, being 'situate in that messuage known as Eden Garden', are clearly 'perquisites and appurtenances thereto attached'. The denial of such produce could not legitimately be a condition of letting — nor, incidentally, could the exaction of long hours of labour improving the landlord's premises. As for the threatening behaviour of the bully-boys sent in by the landlord ('Angels' forsooth! 'Hell's Angels' more like!), this is obviously Rachmanism of the worst complexion. 'Justify the ways of God to men' — you must be joking!

ROBIN RAVENSBOURNE

Dear T.S.,

A poem about a bent old party who's past it hasn't much appeal. The bits about Albert and Lou and the clerk are OK but the rest needs to be more *explicit*.

Come under the shadow of this rock,
And I'll show you something different ...

Promising. Readers like a touch of the differents, but *spell it out*.

... Philomel, by a barbarous king
So rudely forced ...

Rape and royalty, not bad. But forced to do *what* And if Mr. Eugenides *is* as queer as a £4 note, it needs to be *told*.

On Margate Sands.
I can connect
Nothing with nothing.

That's no news, *scrap it*. And your lingo is a bit antique, 'jugs' and 'dugs' are out; 'knockers', T.S., 'knockers'. Titlewise *The Waste Land* won't do. I prefer your line:

Rock and no water and the sandy road.

Good that.

ERIC HOYLE

Dear Mr Seliot,

Thank you for your manuscript entitled 'Notes On The Waste Land'. Unfortunately, our reader's report was unfavourable. He thought it an interesting new genre, composed as it is entirely of numbered notes and cross-references, including a substantial passage in Latin, and relating to an apparently fictional piece. Quite a departure from convention! — but I fear our public are not ready for such radical experiment. Perhaps a smaller publishing company may elucidate its intentions — or rationale, as their parlance has it.

I also attach some snippets of poetry and jotted workings, including some on bird noises, which you accidentally appended to your manuscript. Perhaps if you wrote the fictional piece itself, you would achieve success in your parody of critical indexing. A fringe journal might be interested.

BILL GREENWELL

Dear Mr Bunyan,

Thank you for your story 'Pilgrim's Progress', which I am afraid we must return. We feel, despite your admirably respectful acknowledgement of all biblical sources to which you were indebted, that there is some weakness in plot and characterisation. It was, for instance, a trifle unsubtle to name an obstinate character Obstinate, and a faithful character Faithful. It rather gives the game away, and bespeaks limited psychological insight. There seemed some inconsistency, too: this character Faithful was apparently killed during the course of the story, but mysteriously reappeared at its conclusion — how, we were not informed. Finally, we must also question the morality of a tale involving desertion of spouse and family achieving an apparently happy ending in Israel. We are mindful of the moral consequences of promoting such work, concerned that our literature be suitable for the whole family.

WILL BELLENGER

Dear Mr Gibson,

Sorry to have to return your 'Decline and Fall of the Romany Empire' (not exactly the snappiest of tittles, lets face it) especially as its obviously taken you a week or two to put the stuff together but frankly theirs just no market for this sort of heavy fact book just at the moment. In fact, facts — who needs them? No doubt your's are all very accurate but there again, accuracy — who needs it? as far as marketability goes, accuracy is just there to be flaunted. Youve got to figute the anlges book-wise as of now and you're story-line just doesnt divide itself neatly into the fifty minute slots that might make it saleable otherwise TV-wise. Ive had our film rights man in but he just can't see the Jaon Collins part anywhere. But they'res good writing their no mistake, so press on Ted — nildespairwatsit.

RUFUS STONE

Tony Miles

Chess

No 190 **Problem 176**

The main trouble with problem 176 was working out the position as black pawns on Qside black squares had become almost totally invisible. As it happens it was just about possible to deduce the position. My introduction implied that material was level and by a process of elimination the missing pawns must have been the blurs on QB2 and QR4. (QR2 and QB4 are out because of the suggested moves N-R7 and P-QB5, and Q3 would leave the N en prise.)

In fact the position came from an instructive game Miles — Michaelides from Lone Pine this year. After the opening moves 1.P-KN3, P-K4; 2.B-N2, P-Q4; 3.P-Q3, N-KB3; 4.N-KB3, N-B3; 5.0-0, B-K2; 6.P-QR3! P-QR4; 7.P-N3!? 0-0; 8.B-N2, P-K5, 9.PxP, NxP; 10.P-B4! PxP; 11.Q-B2! B-B3(!) 12.PxP, B-B4; 13.Q-B1, superficially White's position looks a wreck — he is behind in development and the Qside is weak. However, I felt quite happy as I saw a clear plan to fight for the initiative. First the key move R-R2, destined for QN2 to hit the foca point on QN7, then undermine the N(K4) and force it to move (Q-B4 and N-R4 being the likely moves to accomplish this), then complete development with N-QB3 eyeing the weakened Q5 and QN5 square followed by doubling rooks with strong pressure (Note that much of White's play is based on the weakness of Black's P-QR4 advance. The QN square is important, and an eventual . . . P-QN can be undermined by P-B5.)

It is tempting to attribute the fact that everythir goes exactly according to plan to the relati

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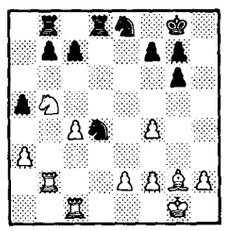
understanding of the two players, but even in the post mortem Black was unable to find a clear way to equalise and within a couple of very natural moves he is clearly worse. 12. . . R-K1; 14.R-R2! Q-K2; 15.Q-B4! B-N3; 16.BxB, NxB; 17.N-B3, KR-Q1 (18.N-QN5, QR-B1; 19.B-R3 was threatened); 18.N-QN5, N-K1; 19.N-R4! (unveiling the long diagonal and eliminating Black's best minor piece) Q-K4; 20.NxB, RPxN; 21.R-N1, QR-N1; 22.R(2)-N2, QxQ; 23.PxQ, N-Q5 (a good try) and we have reached the position of problem 176. (see diagram).



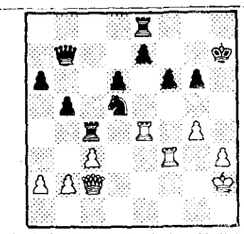
In fact White has two strong continuations. First the lesser moves: (a) 24. NxN, RxN; 25.RxP, RxR; 26.RxR, RxQBP gives White nothing. (b) 24.P-K3, NxN; 25.RxN (PxN is nothing special), N-Q3! 26.RxRP, NxP; 27.R-R7, P-QN4! and Black is comfortable. (d) 24.N-R7, R-R1! 25.RxP, NxPch. 26.K-B1, NxP is fine for Black. However, (c) 24.N-B3! is good. Eg (i) . . . P-N3; 25.P-QB5, N-K5; 26.N-Q5! K-B1; 27.PxP, PxP; 28.P-K3! (but not 28.RxP, RxR; 29.RxR, N-B3! with counterplay) winning a pawn, or (ii) . . . N-Q3; 25.P-QB5, N-B5; 26.RxP, RxR; 27.RxR, NxP (or . . . N-K3; 28.B-Q5! NxQBP? 29.RxP) 28.RxP, N-K3; 29.R-R7! and if NxQBP 30.RxRP wins a piece.

In the game I was not completely confident about the complications of the last line and so chose (c) 24.P-QB5! Play continued . . . N-K3 (forced since . . . NxN; 25.RxN wins a pawn eg 25 . . . P-N3; 26.B-B6 etc); 25.N-R7! NxQBP! (25. . . R-R1; 26.RxP, N-B4; 27.R-N5! RxN; 28.RxN is positionally winning owing to the superior minor piece, the stupid black rook and weak pawns) 26.N-B6, N-R5; 27.R-N3! N-B6! 28.NxR(Q1)! NxR; 29.NxNP! (29.N-B6 was tempting but after . . . N-Q7 the R has no safe square!) Now, in my opinion the dislocated black forces and his weak Qside pawns give White a decisive positional plus. The conclusion was 29. . . N-Q7; 30.R-QB3! (keeping the N fenced in) P-R5; 31.B-B6, N-N6; 32.R-B4! N-B3; 33.RxP, K-R2; 34.K-B1, N-Q7ch; 35.K-K1, N(7)-K5; 36.RxN! NxR; 37.BxN, R-QR1; 38.N-Q6! Resigns. If . . . R-R5; 39.NxP, RxB; 40.N-N5ch.

April prizewinners:- Mr Taylor £9, Mr Deshmukh £8, Messrs James and Sahasrabudhe £7 each and Messrs R. Brown, McSheehy, Nash and Sobey £5 each.

Problem 190

White to play. How should the game go? Answers to me at the NEW STATESMAN postmarked no later than 6 August.

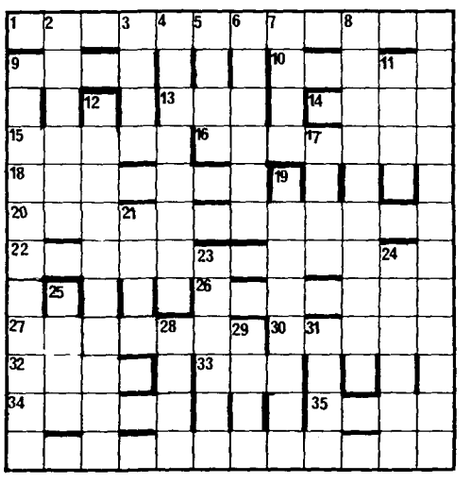


Solution to problem 188

1.Q-R8ch, N-N1; 2QxPch!! KxQ; 3.BxBch, K-R1 (. . . K-R3; 4.B-B8ch mates); 4.RxNch! KxR; 5.R-N1ch, K-R1; 6.B-B6mate.

Salamanca 32 'Quota'

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Salamanca 32, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 5 August.



The quotation beginning with the three words (unclued) at 12 and reading from 1 — 9 around the grid perimeter is something Salamanca might expect to hear the solver say, its unchecked letters making SKIES ECHOING OATH.

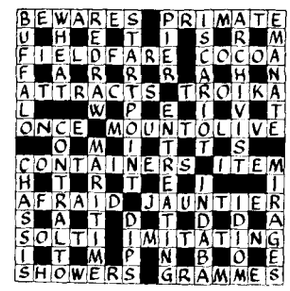
ACROSS

9 Laugh about classic fast loser? (4)
10 Tune this for sound etc. or dial endlessly perhaps (5)
13 Mustang? Must show this horse broken in (3)
14 Game (outdoors) leisurely fellow heads for (4)
15 Such passion produces some vile acts? (5)
16 Illegal record of Dylan e.g. mostly produced and let go out (7)
18 Swampy and dangerous? Herculean man for sorting out? (One not much less) (7)
20 One having the skill in avarice *won't* be so described (12)
22 Possibly see what's recent in cine coming out here? (12)
26 Old auction abroad with humble backing (7)
27 Sultan — me? Clamour for man about (7)
30 Plants lain round about for all to see? (5)
32 Jugular in part (4)
33 Know long ago of most monstrous King (3)
34 VIP, European, superior chap, holding year book (5)
35 Foreign hat designed by one (4)

DOWN

2 Uncle Podger hanging a picture, say — awkward, I learn (6)
3 Of little value in Bulgaria? (4)
4 Possibly having a dent etc.? (8)
5 This Captain, a hard seaman (4)
6 English boy, ailing, vanished (6)
7 Found round lakes edges, under, also (4)
8 Like most worship it's loud or excited about one (10)
11 Evergreen, one attaining length (example) (4)
12 *See preamble*
17 Time-piece? Wrong! (4)
19 Cultivated, can taiga be as forest in Brazil? (8)
21 Given mass, here's one of its countries? (4)
23 Hitched — having seized love too! (6)
24 One's poorly with internal affliction on the rise — windy? (6)
25 In this sea-ear you'll hear wattage, say (4)
28 Biblical sin not acceptable in beginning (4)
29 Skuld, say, in Scandinavian or Norse (4)
31 If music's as the poet says, regard this as the bill? (4)

Solution to 1349



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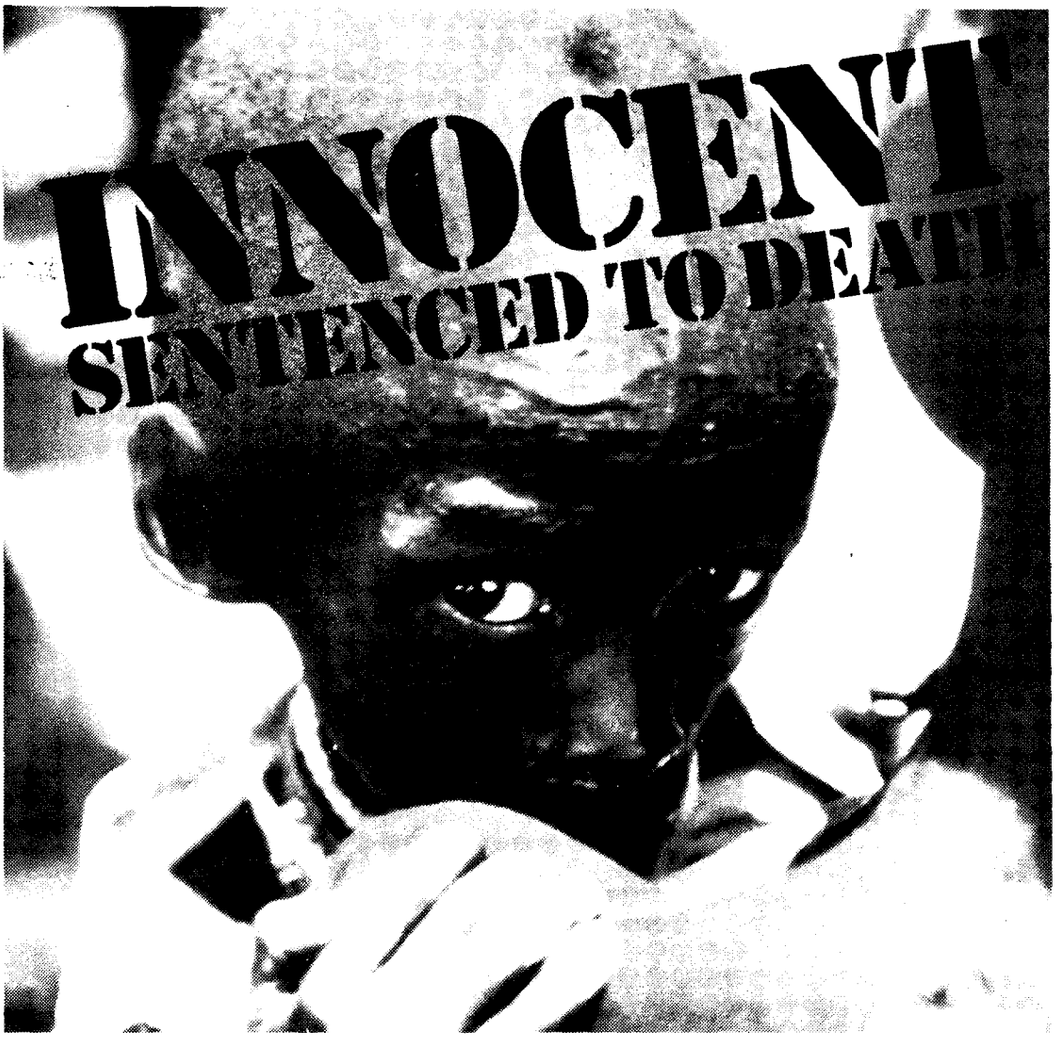

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